

IRELAND TO-DAY

SOCIAL • ECONOMIC • NATIONAL • CULTURAL

JULY 1936

VOL. I NO. 2

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Single copies—monthly, 1/-; post paid, 1/4. Prepaid subscriptions: 14/- per annum; 7/3, six months; 3/9, three months, post free.

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EDITORIAL

NEVER, perhaps, was there more genuine heart-searching in the world than to-day, and it was inevitable that the spirit of self-questioning and probing should reach us here. There is evidence of it and something is bound to come of it. To thinking people, and in the spiritual sphere, too, issues become clearly knit and the path of right or wrong becomes defined with increasing clearness, so that in the political sphere or the spiritual, with the nation or with the individual, wrong decisions are not lightly taken but often the deliberate choice of self-interest against right.

Among the nations, one by one, the brazen abandonment of accepted moral codes, if it does not actually forebode the coming of the law of the jungle, has at least put the clock back by centuries as far as concerns any idealistic solution of national enmities. For with the abandonment of the common code that had been hopefully accepted with the establishment of the Hague Court or the League of Nations in substitution for brute force and the old system of alliances, the machinery for real alliance or co-operation has virtually broken down.

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NEVER was the tempo of civilization more rapid ; never, at the same time, were the agents of its own destruction more dynamic ; never were alliances less altruistic or pledges less earnest ; never were the ties of society, the very warp and woof of the whole fabric of our civilisation, more insubstantially knit. With the violation of all solemn covenants, with the smashing of every obstacle that bars the way to power, the whole social order—that imperfect stability that at least permitted man to live gregariously—is threatened and can only be saved, or is it restored, by standing fast to principles once held sacred.

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IRELAND may be regarded as a helpless cork on the crest of this violence, but nothing is truer than that tenacity to principle, a simple adherence to plain honest precepts, can outlive dynasties and defy anarchy. The worldly-wise become infected with the passing success, the glamour that expediency can offer, but when chaos comes it is simplicity, it is truth, that wins out. To Ireland, expediency has brought nothing abiding. Even

those who have given a half-hearted shelter to expediency know that they will be disowned in time. The greatest advance made in recent times in this country is the recognition that nothing is static—the acceptance, more and more universally, of a higher concept of our purpose and an ever-increasing measure of our rights.

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THE Belfast Government has been put on the spot of late. The National Council for Civil Liberties, for all the charges that they are self-appointed nobodies, have obtained so singularly good a press in England that we almost suspect that it has been partly inspired. Belfast has sat up, taken notice and issued an apologia which has been nowhere accepted. We are not immediately concerned with the rights and wrongs of the case against the Northern Government but with the somewhat ludicrous spectacle of its reception in the South. In both States, "special powers" have been progressively adopted, beginning mildly and for limited periods and ending or rather continuing much more vigorously and for indefinite periods. Such principles as that of Habeas Corpus founded with a salvo of trumpets and characterised as a milestone in human progress are heavily discounted.

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THE biggest danger is the cumulative acceptance of restrictions on our liberty not to speak of the positive hurt to our better nature that comes of the criminal branding of those who, apart from the affront of their political or sectarian antipathy, are guilty of no crime in the eyes of God and no contravention of any existing criminal law. This danger is real. It is independent of political affiliations. The manufacture of offences is an industry which we were better spared.

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A CONCLUDING point, to take the case of the North alone, is that the initiating legislation that conferred statehood willy-nilly on the two fractions of Ireland, gave certain powers of control to the elected representatives of the people, with assured methods of guaranteeing their conformity with the will of the electorate. Yet the initiating legislator—England—has coolly stood by (to put no worse complexion on it) whilst first the implementation of the people's voice has been distorted by

gerrymandering ; and, secondly, authority has been so widely relegated to violently partisan individuals that all relationship back to the originating authority, or reflection of the spirit of the nominal control, has been lost in a welter of one-sided decrees, pogroms, deeds of violence and acts of differentiation.

●

LAST year the Minister for Local Government at Dublin expressed the hope that an effort would be made to clean up the country so that this year our face might be clean in time for the visitors' arrival. That time is with us now but nothing has been done, which only emphasises the adage as to nobody's business, and incidentally shows that government by order and decree must be more availed of, especially as the bureaucratic machinery is abundantly there and a little sincerity would see to its use instead of depending on the make-believe of the decentralised powers of local bodies. A Demolition Committee is badly wanted to remove every dead wall and pile of ruined houses and debris in the country. Waterford, Limerick, Cork and Dublin would provide immediate urban employment, whilst if relief work is required in country districts, almost a random selection from our villages and towns could be made—Ardagh, Ballyroan, Tyrrellspass, Oranmore, Tuam, Rathcoole, Tarbert, Buttevant, Mallow and innumerable others—perhaps our readers in such centres will form committees?

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IN these months, bright skies and abundant foliage deal kindly with many an eyesore, and the rich tones of rusted corrugated iron blend harmoniously enough with our landscape, but for the greater part of the year man-made ugliness oppresses us and our drab towns breed migrants. Colour would do a lot. Many a town could be beautified almost overnight by limewash—white, cream or buff. And in these colours who has not found the new cottages a delight to the eye? Or even left as plain concrete ; only when, at extra cost lines are laid on to imitate—though the likeness has always eluded us—massive granite blocks, does ugliness supervene. Simplicity and no camouflage should be our slogans—good taste follows.

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IN a hamlet not ten miles from Dublin the housing problem has been solved by a hedge of *cupressus macrocarpa*, which

mercifully screens from our eyes the bad housing conditions of a decent little community. But rural or small town conditions, however awful, are of secondary importance on account of the pure air, the immediate access of open spaces and the limited time use to which the houses are put. The real problem is Dublin and the larger towns, and we hope soon to examine the extent to which the slum problem is being overtaken if, indeed, in spite of the obvious housing activity, it is being overtaken at all. For, a word of warning, the recent house collapse case is only the forerunner of a phase that is nearly upon us.

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THE Library Association of Ireland held its Annual Conference at Limerick almost at the same time as a similar congress of English librarians was assembled at Margate. We were represented at both Conferences and were gratified at the high level of the papers and discussions. The work done by librarians is unobtrusive but of great import. By their zeal and industry the whole reading and cultural life of our people will be influenced and measured. Both conferences were splendidly organised, stoutly constructive and of the happiest augury for the future.

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SINCE we have been at some pains in the matter, we may be pardoned for making good the omission in our first number of indicating our practical interest in, and contribution to, Ireland's industrial renaissance. Our cover-board, paper, ink, type and blocks are all *déanta i nEirinn*. We avail of this opportunity to acknowledge with real thanks the numerous congratulatory messages we have received and with even greater gratitude several acceptable criticisms.

A FOREIGN COMMENTARY

WRITING, as I do, some ten days before the fateful meeting of the nations at Geneva on June 26th, it is impossible to do more than to examine the few ways in which the figurative cat may leap, and to make some suggestions as to what would constitute a satisfactory bound. Meanwhile, various eminent statesmen are striving to be the one to crack the whip. But to leave the world of metaphor : Mr. Chamberlain has permitted himself to state that the continuance of sanctions against Italy would be midsummer madness. He proclaims that in order not to jeopardize Anglo-Italian friendship further, England must "face facts." The judges at Geneva are to tell the criminal, branded as such by them, that they are going to annul their previous decision since (a) he has proved a successful aggressor, and (b) they would hate to lose his friendship, anyway. Mr. Chamberlain is, of course, perfectly logical in his attitude, from the Conservative, Imperialist point of view. The people who are illogical are those who want to play the role of idealist and liberator at Geneva, and yet cling to the British colonies throughout the world, on the grounds that "England is ruling them for their own good." A very definite change in colonial policy will be necessary on the part of the big powers if they are to uphold their condemnation of Italy for doing what they all did, without their, as yet, publicly repenting therefor. It is often claimed that England (a) is now ruling her colonies with a view to giving them self-government bit by bit, and (b) "anyway doesn't want to hand them over to people who might treat the natives worse than she does." This double defence is palpably insincere in the case of many of the colonies, as an examination of the facts will show. In India cultured Indians, who would make admirable administrators of an autonomous India, are, so far from being trained and encouraged to learn the art of self-government that they spend long years in gaol with no charge made against them. In Egypt the merits of the Egyptians as a race are only being discovered now that Abyssinia is Italian. But why labour the point, we in Ireland know by experience that only the strongest races can stand the strain of being "taught how to govern themselves," by England.

Mr. Chamberlain, therefore, is speaking for an Imperialist English Government, and Mr. Eden may possibly be regretfully abandoned. One thing, however, should be recalled, and that is that Mr. Chamberlain was not quite so outspoken *before* the elections, and that though his friends are many in the House,

Eden's are many throughout the country. The average Englishman is not merely an idealist who hates to see Italy getting away with armed robbery, he is also a little tired of paying for the defence of an Empire which is becoming exceedingly burdensome to the many, however lucrative to the few. Here France may show a lead, for though she has no intention of handing over her colonies to other exploiters, yet she herself has little taste for the continued exploitation of the natives of Morocco, Algeria, and the other French colonies. The task of readjustment will not be easy, but it is one that England would do well to watch. Obviously if sanctions are to be continued against Italy other Imperialist Powers must show their willingness to grant a real measure of autonomy to *their* Abyssinias.

And if sanctions *were* continued? Would Italy leave the League? If she did, as is probable, the League would certainly be by no means as weak as if sanctions were removed; on the contrary, with Italy's increasing difficulties at home and abroad, the League's prestige would grow according as her power was seen to be real. The fall of the dictatorship in Italy, should it come, might entail some suffering, particularly in the matter of pride, but the average Italian might yet find his lot not so hard to bear. Italy has survived other civilizations than Fascism. That Italy's departure would deter Germany from re-entering the League is very questionable. In the first place, on what grounds would she remain outside? Secondly, a League which showed real strength, coupled with a willingness to accept Germany as an equal among nations, could not fail to earn Germany's respect. Thirdly, any alliance at present between Germany and Italy would necessarily be of a most precarious kind. If, on the other hand, sanctions are removed, the League will crumble beneath the blows of such "realists" as Chamberlain, and we shall have the chaos of the armaments race, instead of the safer ground of collective security. Not a very pleasant prospect.

The centre of interest, therefore, is Geneva. Linked likewise with the question of colonial readjustment is the terrible situation in Palestine. News from that country is as yet too hazy to permit of a clear view, but it looks as if the solution there will be extremely difficult to find. The struggle is not only of race against race, but also of class against class.

In France, where the class struggle has been more orderly, it is nonetheless proceeding apace. The new French Government has not yet attended Geneva as I write, so I may be permitted to turn to a consideration of what is going on within

the country. During the few weeks since his assumption of power, Blum has shown himself not merely the extremely intelligent man that his intimates have always known him to be, but also a strong and decisive executive. It is only by the exercise of wonderful restraint that the ranks of Tuscany have succeeded in forbearing to cheer. While the difficulties involved in the settling of the strike situation in France were by no means as great as the panic-monger Press painted them, yet Blum's smooth and finished methods of surmounting them are of good omen for his future success. The suggestions made by some of our news-purveyors, that Blum's government could not last a month, are so patently farcical that one is led to wonder whether the prospect of a Socialist success in France *without* "atrocities" is not cruelly disappointing to certain sections in many countries. We find it suggested, for instance, that Blum will lose the support of the Communist group before he has been a fortnight in power. Now, in the first place, this is only likely to happen if no real attempt is made to put the Popular Front programme into effect, and Blum has already shown that he is no hesitant leader. And further, to see how absurd such a forecast must be, it is only necessary to remember that the Blum government is backed by 385 votes out of 618, and that, of these, 82 are Communists. It takes no very deep calculations to show that, unless these 82 become so disgusted with Blum that they would prefer to vote for a Conservative capitalist government, their mere refusal to vote *for* Blum would not mean the overthrow of the Popular Front Government. While it is entertaining to see the Conservatives hoping wildly for the support of the Communists, it would be a mistake to take such prophecies too seriously. An attempt to understand the motives which prompt them, however, might well prove instructive.

The Charter of Labour introduced by Blum contains nothing which has not been part of the Popular Front programme for months past, and is, indeed, merely a basis for new regulations in the future. The modest stipulation of certain increases in wages, of a fifteen-day paid holiday for all workers, of the recognition of the workers' right to form a trade union, and to have a say in regulating hours and conditions of work, are eminently reasonable. The 40-hour week itself, which is perhaps the biggest reform as yet, has for years been *discussed* at Geneva. The alarm, therefore, of capitalists in many countries is not at the outrageous nature of Blum's new laws, but at the ease with which they seem to be coming into effect. The people to be

hit in France will undoubtedly be the employers, the owners, and with the path to socialism and the emancipation of the working class being made to appear so easy in France, it is small wonder that every effort is being made by French and foreign capitalists to overthrow or discredit the Popular Front Government.

While Labour movements in many countries in Europe are becoming increasingly powerful, the U.S.A. are getting ready for another Presidential election. And there, too, the words Socialism and Communism are being used to attack those who dare to suggest that possibly certain profits are excessive and certain monopolies unjustifiable. Roosevelt's chief opponent, Landon, accuses him of interfering too much with private enterprise. Roosevelt himself is wondering whether he has interfered enough. The American voter is beginning to wonder the same thing, and, as a result, Roosevelt is certain to sweep the country once more. A man frequently attacked from both sides, he has yet done much to civilize America in her attitude to that most vital of the world's problems to-day: the calculation of the extent to which a government may allow human lives to be transformed into dividends. Upon its solution in one country may depend, provided that other nations are willing to learn, the future peace of the world.

OWEN SHEEHY SKEFFINGTON.

Since the above was written, Mr. Eden has decided that for his country's sake he will sacrifice what he holds most dear, his principles. We may take it that he will not be abandoned. I suggested last month that the French Government's attitude will no longer serve as a British excuse for acting slowly. So keenly is this realised in England that when Delbos, the new French Foreign Minister, tried to get Eden to meet him in a Channel port, Eden simply refused. The British Government now prefers to state its views on sanctions without first consulting France. The reason is appallingly obvious.

Mr. Baldwin's views in 1934 (hastily rearranged for election purposes, but now adopted once more in their original form) were thus expressed: "a collective peace system, in my view, is perfectly impracticable . . . it is hardly worth considering." Two questions occur to one arising from this British volte-face. First, what is to replace the system of collective security so lightly abandoned; is it to be war as of yore? Secondly, were sanctions adopted in the first place merely as an attempt to protect British Colonial interests? Or was there not some principle involved?

O.S.S.

PURCHASING POWER

ECONOMISTS, politicians, social reformers and all others whose sympathies lead them to study and to attempt to find solutions for the economic depression from which our nation like others has suffered, have with more or less unanimity decided, that lack of purchasing power is the root of our trouble. Some method of increasing purchasing power is therefore sought by all parties in their suggestions for the revival of industry.

The classical economists claim that what is required is an increase of expenditure upon capital goods such as houses, heavy machinery and up-to-date manufacturing tools. They couple with this programme the necessity for finding a means of reviving international trade and the free export of goods on a stabilised basis of exchange.

On the other hand, many politicians, with interests national rather than international, advocate increasing purchasing power by reserving the home market for the products of the home manufacturer. "Increase the demand for home manufacture by excluding the goods of the foreigner and our own people will have more to spend," is their slogan. Their opponents, the Free Traders, the men who believe that width of market is essential to big business, point out that decreasing imports must mean decreasing exports, and thus what the manufacturer gains through increased sales at home, the exporter of home-made goods will lose through reduced sales in foreign markets. "Sweep away the tariffs, quotas, exchange restrictions, and other impediments to the free exchange of goods," they say, "and the greatest measure of purchasing power attainable will be ours."

Another group known as Social Credit enthusiasts trace lack of purchasing power to the "stranglehold" exerted by bankers over the quantity of money issued. They claim that purchasing power is deliberately withheld by money profiteers and they would end this money monopoly of bankers by following the

advice given by Major Douglas. They seek to inflate and distribute purchasing power by scrapping the sterling standard to which our currency is definitely pegged. Then by issuing large credits to the public generally in the form of paper money, and by means of Government loans for public works bearing no interest, they would attempt to cause consumption to equate with production.

In studying this problem, often referred to as the problem of "poverty in the midst of plenty," it is of importance to analyse the term "Purchasing Power." It is a delusive term with a strong sentimental appeal. To suggest giving the public purchasing power creates an immediate positive and sympathetic response in our minds. We all desire purchasing power for ourselves, and we all feel that if others could be given purchasing power, some of the benefit derived from their spending would come our way. But directly we dissect "Purchasing Power" and learn its true significance, stripped of glamorous day-dreams, we become more dubious, more work-a-day. "Purchasing Power" is but another way of expressing the term "Income," and increasing other persons' "Incomes" has not by any means the same attractive atmosphere about it that increasing their "Purchasing Power" has. Can a state of perpetual motion in increased incomes be devised by Political Economy, Monetary Manipulation, Social Credit or any form of social reconstruction? I think it can—for workers, but only upon the basis of equality of opportunity and reduction of cost. By equality of opportunity I mean equality of access to land, one of the two essential factors of production and the retention for the benefit of all, of the socially produced values attaching to land.

It would appear that all students of remedies for depression whether they be individualist, socialist or communist, must have as a starting point for their reforms not only an increase of purchasing power or income for some, but also a corrective reduction of the purchasing power or income of others. The

panacea in all cases entails a "Reforming." The crucial point for decision is what incomes shall be cut in order that others may be increased. America, the last stronghold of individually-owned wealth, has capitulated to President Roosevelt's tax-gatherer and is busily redistributing the purchasing power of the "higher brackets" amongst the wage earners of the "lower brackets." This Tarquinian method of levelling incomes by chopping off the upper stories without regard to the sources of incomes or the manner in which they are derived, does not make a universal appeal to commonsense. Redistribution of purchasing power whilst perhaps both excellent and necessary, is not the same thing as increasing purchasing power. The American method may be a means of redistributing purchasing power, but it does not follow that it is a means of increasing its total volume.

There are four sources from which incomes can be derived : (1) Robbery ; (2) Charity ; (3) the Production of goods by means of our own labour and exchange of them for goods, the product of the labour of others, or similarly, exchange of services for goods ; and (4) The Exertion over others of some form of legalised compulsion that results in the surrender by them of a proportion of the product of their labour.

We may rule out Robbery and Charity, they are not adequate and praiseworthy means of deriving income in everyday circumstances, and come to number three. In this category we recognise the means by which the bulk of all persons derive income. We produce in order to satisfy our own immediate wants and we exchange with others in order that we may satisfy further wants. The exchange is mutually beneficial, and if it is freely consummated, both buyer and seller are equally satisfied. It is because of the development and perfection of exchange between individuals that civilisation has progressed and standards of living have been raised.

Inventors of newer and cheaper methods of satisfying our wants receive their reward in higher incomes. By decreasing

costs they have increased our purchasing power and therefore added to our capacity to satisfy new wants. Reduction in the expenditure of labour required to perfect goods has resulted in a reduction in the necessary exchange value expressed in terms of his own labour which the purchaser must part with to acquire these goods. The reduction of labour costs by the perfection of the machinery of manufacture has brought millions of persons employment in the motor car trades: it has also caused the retail price of cars to fall whilst their efficiency has risen. Falling labour costs have enabled us to satisfy an increasing variety of wants in return for an ever decreasing expenditure of our labour in exchange for each item of wants satisfied. Falling labour costs per unit produced have synchronised with higher wages, but in the last decade particularly, a larger share of accrued profit has been distributed to the shareholders in capitalist enterprises than to the workers.

Technical proficiency is always bringing us nearer to man's first material objective, the satisfaction of his wants with the minimum expenditure of his labour. The desire for voluntary exchange of labour for labour values is an attribute of man as a social animal. Civilisation, viewed from the purely material and economic standpoint, is the result of man's co-operative effort in the production and distribution of the goods and services which he needs to satisfy his wants. Any obstructive force inhibiting the freedom of this progressive effort towards the elimination of labour costs, puts a brake upon progress and destroys the natural, social, ameliorative evolution of mankind, towards his goal of attaining the status of a cultured member of a secure and ever developing society.

Who would grudge Signor Marconi the purchasing power he enjoys as the result of his prodigious inventive genius, the labour of his mind? Has not the steamboat brought the labour values of the products of the Ceylonese coolies, working upon the tea plantations, within the financial ambit of the peasant labouring upon his farm in Mayo? Would not a

reduction in the cost of transport or a reduction in the cost of growing tea in Ceylon cause an increase in the purchasing power of the Mayo man just as a reduction of tea-tax leaves him more income to spend on the satisfaction of his other wants ?

And now we must turn to the fourth method of deriving income. Here, I fancy, we shall find a form of income enjoyed by some which it is justifiable for us to tax in order that all others may have their purchasing power increased.

There is no material want experienced by man, and capable of satisfaction which is unrelated to land, and all wealth is the product of man's labour applied either directly or indirectly to land or its products. Any and every new want that man develops requires access to land and the application of labour thereon, or to its products, before satisfaction of that want is attainable. Land and labour are then the primary economic factors, the former passive, the latter active. For the production of wealth one is sterile without the other. But whereas land is dimensionally limited, labour, provided always that it can find access to land, is both extensively and intensively unlimited, extensively in its total volume, and intensively in its ever improving quality. In every country, therefore, those owning land and controlling access to it are in a position to limit the number of persons who can exert their energies upon it and thereby obtain the means of satisfying their wants, either immediately or through exchange of products.

Intensive co-operation of labour upon land, freely accessible, results in a greater variety of operations and in the maximum production of wealth and satisfaction of wants. The structure of our society to-day rests upon the control of land value. The placing of barriers to and restrictions upon the use of land are vital links in that control. The exploitation of this control by individuals for personal and private profit is the fundamental cause of social distress. The degree to which access to land is impeded and restricted determines the growth of population, and the degree of satisfaction of the ever-increasing

wants of a growing community. In the world at large the desire for control of land and its products is the motive for conquest and the originating cause of wars.

In a country where access to land is free and restriction upon its use non-existent, population grows naturally and into its ports immigrants flock continuously ; for in such circumstances labour finds opportunity unimpeded either by cost of land or payment of rental to landowners, and the entire product of exertion remains the property of the owners of the active economic factor, labour.

Given knowledge of how to satisfy material wants either by means of production or exchange of products, there is nothing that can inhibit man's realisation of satisfaction except incapacity to labour, lack of access to land and factors outside human control. Whereas all men are freely endowed with capacity to labour, nevertheless in our society as constituted, only those can exert their labour upon land or its products who can pay for the right of access or entry to it or find employment with those who have already obtained that right of access. The payment they must make or rental they must pay is not necessarily the land value of to-day, but is based rather upon the speculative value of the future.

Labour is unlimited, its increase has no measure, but land is definitely determined. The area of Ireland remains fixed whether the population be eight millions as it was in 1845 or four millions as it is to-day. Population with its ever increasing wants may increase indefinitely, but land area remains fixed absolutely. Since access to land must in all cases be paid for in order that labour may be applied to it to derive the means of satisfying the wants of all and sundry, it is obvious that those who control land are the arbiters of wealth production and also its primary beneficiaries.

Here then is our fourth means of deriving income. Those who own land derive income by virtue of the power they can exert over others with legal sanction to compel them to surrender

a proportion of the product of their labour applied to land and its products, in return for the privilege of gaining access to this essential factor of production.

Landowners derive income or purchasing power not from their own labour values, but from the labour values of others. They are the proprietors of the world's primary monopoly. The purchasing power of all those who labour in any and every form whatsoever is reduced by the proportion of the product of their labour, which must be handed over to landowners for the privilege of access to land. Whenever landowners deliberately hold land out of production, in order that its scarcity value may appreciate, the purchasing power of others must necessarily be curtailed. Again, wherever landowners fail to develop land to its full capacity, the potential capacity of labour to increase purchasing power is restricted. Our social structure is built upon the sanctity of private ownership, not of land, but of land value. Control of land value, urban or rural, connotes control over the means of livelihood of others, and to acquire it whether by purchase or inheritance is a short cut to social pre-eminence. A person owning land value has no occasion to labour, for others will labour for him and he will require that they pay him a portion of the product in return for no service rendered. He becomes a 'gentleman' as contrasted with a 'worker.'

In the past a dense stream of population has flowed from those countries where land has a high scarcity value to those where that value is lower. Water is for ever seeking a lower level of land, in just the same way, in capitalist states labour is for ever seeking a lower level of appropriated land value. The lower level, which labour seeks, is that which will leave to it a fuller measure of the product.

For many years America was an El Dorado for emigrants for the reason that, in that continent, land was still free to newcomers, and therefore no man would work for a wage lower than he could derive by working for himself upon free land. In just the same way no man in a gold mining camp will seek

employment at a lower wage than he can secure by mining gold on his own account.

Monopolists whose purchasing power originates in their prescriptive right to land values add nothing to the common fund of products. Their function is to deplete the purchasing power of their victims and to canalise toward themselves the reward of the labour of others. They are the drones of the working hive and in the productive machine they fill no useful economic purpose. Every increase of population and every improvement in productive processes adds to the value of land. The tramways made wealthy the owners of suburban land, and now the motor-omnibus is turning those farmers who own road frontages into well-off ground landlords. Surely, we are entitled to tax and distribute this type of income accruing to some, but derived from the activities of all. If depression always follows where there is maldistribution of wealth, it is the incomes of those who draw purchasing power from land value which best merit re-distribution.

Land value might well be singled out as a source of income upon which the community has an especially legitimate lien for taxation, in as much as it is the community that gives this value to land and not the exertion of landowners. Other sources of income which are peculiarly the result of, and originate in, the labour of the income owner, could in that event, be relieved of taxation to an equivalent extent. I am appealing for consideration of the expediency and justice of taxing more heavily incomes derived from the social values attaching to ownership of land value, whilst relieving the burden of taxation upon incomes derived from the labour of the individual in the use of land and its products. A tax on land values would not be a tax on all land, but on valuable land only. It would be assessed in proportion to the value and not in proportion to the use made of land. In effect it would mean that these who occupy such land or draw profit from natural opportunities would be required to subscribe to the national exchequer

for the privilege of doing so. It would tax the scarcity value of fertility and the scarcity values of sites now in the beneficial ownership of private persons. Any attempt to increase production for the home market in preference to export for foreign markets, without first controlling the monopoly of land value, is doomed to failure so far as increasing the purchasing power of the masses is concerned. Economic Nationalism will cause the owners of port sites, of wharves and of land in the exporting towns to suffer reduction in their rent rolls, but the owners of the sites upon which the new inland factories are built and of the surrounding territory in which the employees must live will be the gainers. The masses will remain as poor as they were under the export and import system, as poor as they have always been, since the ownership of land ceased to carry with it the duties, responsibilities and costs which ownership entailed in mediaeval times.

Politicians may by means of legislation cause the incomes of the individual owners of land value to rise or fall, but as a class, those who own the primary passive factor of production are unassailable except by the Socialist method of Nationalisation of land or the Individualist method of Taxation of the unimproved site Value of the land which each controls.

Free trade with Great Britain under the land value monopoly system has resulted in both free export of human beings, and free export of capital to develop those parts of the British Empire to which many of these emigrants turned in their effort to find the opportunity denied them in their own country. They sought and found a lower level of land value in the United States of America. Emigrants and unemployed persons, the so-called 'surplus' population, were denied, and are still denied, opportunity of access to land in town or country, unless they first or last pay fines to the private owners of socially produced land value. The unemployed are to-day, either directly or indirectly denied purchasing power because private ownership of land value, particularly in urban and suburban areas, causes

land to be withheld from the market. Speculators purchase land around and within growing communities in the hope of being able to sell it for the enhanced value that increasing population and the growth of industry will give to it. The purchasing power that should have belonged to this "surplus" population is being year after year gathered into the private banking accounts of the owners of land value and the whole community must be mulcted by taxation of its labour to feed and clothe that surplus population lest it die of hunger in our streets or create a revolution.

An export trade that is not automatically controlled so that it shall result in national benefit may bring in its train untold suffering to those unable to protect themselves against its economic effects. But so long as the increasing value of land remains with the landowner alone, it will make little ultimate difference in the lot of the masses whether the land of Ireland is used to feed Englishmen with cattle or Irishmen with wheat and those products of industrial factories which they require to enable them to produce efficiently. The increased site values on which new factories and mills will stand, the land values on which the houses of the workers will be built and the grocers' shops and creameries that will supply them, will swell the banking accounts of the individual owners of land value in much the same way as the Sweepstake prizes subscribed for by all go to the individual prizewinners. Land speculators will absorb the purchasing power of those who must work to live and must pay fines and rentals to landowners for the opportunity to produce, or else remain idle and hungry.

The monopoly control exercised by bankers over money is of altogether secondary importance to the monopoly control exercised by landowners over wealth production. Indeed, the very security upon which bankers give credit and base their demands for interest is land value. Money is not wealth, but it is exchangeable for wealth in any and all of its varied forms. Bankers do not make loans against the security of character

alone. They look for material security, either the title to land or the title to a long lease of landed property, or to stocks, shares and debentures, all of which have direct relationship to land value. To him who hath land-value shall be given credit is almost universal banking practice.

To issue more money will not redistribute purchasing power so long as those who own the primary factor of production can demand an ever-increasing share of the money issued. What we need is equal opportunity of access to land—not free money. Cure the land problem, and you cure the money problem—attempt to cure the money problem in the first place and the land problem will defeat you. So long as the ever-increasing rental value of land, created by the activity of the whole community and by increasing population, flows into the pockets of one class only, just so long shall the poor continue to labour in order that the rich may remain rich or relatively rich.

Neither classical political economy nor money manipulation, nor economic nationalism, nor financial nationalism can correct maldistribution of purchasing power unless the socially created value which attaches to land, carefully assessed and separated from its improvement value, reverts to the benefit of, and for the use of, the entire community.

ROBERT BARTON

LAMENT FOR A DEAD LEADER

Boom ! Boom ! ye cannon, boom o'er land and sea !
(Our tower of strength is shattered and lies low)
Blow out, O ye bugles of Ireland, blow !
Roll ! Roll ! ye drums, and speak out mournfully !

Blow out, O ye bugles of Ireland, blow !
(Our beacon of light is quenched : we cannot see)
Roll, Roll, ye drums, and speak out mournfully !
Shrill out ! ye pipes, your piercing strains of woe.

Roll ! Roll ! ye drums and speak out mournfully !
(Our shroud's clutched in the hand that struck the blow)
Shrill out ! ye pipes, your piercing strains of woe
He fought, he died to set his country free.

Shrill out ! ye pipes, your piercing strains of woe
(Fate writes our doom's script, leering evilly)
He fought, he died to set his country free.
O that he lived to find one friend a foe !

He fought, he died to set our country free
(Bear him to rest with solemn steps and slow)
O that he lived to find one friend a foe !
Now shall they mouthe he silenced utterly.

O that he lived to find one friend a foe !
(His like we shall not breed in years to be)
Welcome him, Christ ; he, too, clomb Calvary !
Dawn breaks but does not set the East aglow.

Welcome him, Christ ; he, too, clomb Calvary !
(O heart that wrought the tyrant's overthrow !)
Dawn breaks but does not set the East aglow,
Boom ! Boom ! ye cannon ! boom o'er land and sea.

Dawn breaks but does not set the East aglow,
(Our tears are all we have to give to thee)
Boom ! Boom ! ye cannon ! Boom o'er land and sea,
Blow out, O ye bugles of Ireland, blow !

PADRAIC GREGORY.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN ULSTER

As threatened loss makes every valued possession seem more desirable, so the Irishman of to-day thinks more of Ulster than his predecessors ever did, and yet those chapters of Northern history which have most bearing on our present day political problems remain unread and to a large extent unwritten. What made an Imperial fortress of the most Gaelic province in Ireland? Was it the introduction of alien planters during the reign of James I.? A simple and satisfying theory this, but if a full explanation of present-day Ulster were to be found in the plantation records, then "The Soldiers' Song" should be a most popular tune with the majority in Antrim (since neither that county nor Down was included in the great plantation) while, conversely, Donegal and Cavan should have no place in a Dublin Parliament. Few Irish counties escaped plantation, and the less fortunate districts of the South were planted and replanted, but there is only one "Ulster." The truth is that the plantation policy was never a success in Ireland. Even this great effort under James I. must have been more or less a failure since there is a nationalist majority of over 150,000 on the planted lands to-day, while the Imperialists now enjoy their greatest power in those parts of Ulster which were excluded from Chichester's scheme. Other factors, then, besides the Ulster Plantation, must have contributed to the de-nationalization of our north-east corner.

THE FIRST IMMIGRANTS

To be the last stronghold of lost causes seems to be the fate of Ulster. Attention has often been drawn to the fact that at the end of the 16th century, when the Gaelic state had been shattered in the other provinces, Ulster chiefs still continued to administer Irish law to a people who lived as though the Norman Conquest had never occurred. Now while this is

quite true of the greater part of the province, between the Bann and the sea (as Hill has pointed out) life was quite different. Here invading Scots, hopeful planters, exasperated Irish, and English soldiers from Dublin clashed in a fierce struggle for land which destroyed the traditional mode of life ; nor did any other ordered system take its place. Of all these warring peoples the Scotch benefited most by the general confusion which ensued, and to them belongs the doubtful honour of having prepared the ground for the foundation of the new Ulster. These Scots prospered in Ulster because they were not aliens, and because their coming was due to the natural movement of a people not dependent upon any artificial paper plantation.

When the empire fever was at its height in Ireland in the early centuries of the Christian era, ambitious young men of the Dal Riada from the Antrim coast established a colony of Ulstermen on the Scotch shores, and these colonists later succeeded in extending their influence over all North Britain. This was no mere military conquest, but a colonization which changed the religion, speech, culture and name of the land so that it came to be known as " Little Ireland " or " Scotia Minor." To the mediaeval man an inhabitant of Ireland was a " Scotus " and it was in recognition of the fact that the Gaelic inhabitants of North Britain came from Ireland that they were called " Scots."

The two peoples did not drift apart. Great Ulster families divided by the Moyle Stream were reunited again and again in the bonds of matrimony, while many a Scotchman fleeing from justice or injustice found a pleasant asylum amongst his kinsmen in Ireland. Geographical proximity and unity of race and language made communication between the two countries inevitable, but it was only in the 15th century that the tide which once had borne the land-hungry Dalridians to Scotland turned and, receding, swept the descendants of these same warriors back to the very harbours from which their ancestors had set sail.

John Mor MacDonnell, son of the Lord of the Isles, having been defeated by his elder brother in a family quarrel, wisely decided to retire to his wife's estate in the Antrim glens where he founded with his followers the first strong colony of Scotsmen to fix their tenacious grip upon the soil of Ulster. This colony became a recognised refuge for the vanquished after every bloody conflict, and on various occasions during the 15th century, groups of Islesmen came to join the first MacDonnells in Ireland.

Dublin Castle viewed these incursions with considerable alarm, fearing lest the Scots, a people even more obnoxious than the native Irish, might eventually conquer the whole province for themselves. Deputy after deputy led military expeditions against the MacDonnells, which merely forced these powerful lords to enlist thousands and thousands of Islesmen and Highlanders to fight their battles. So the Scots poured into Ireland.

For an Irishman, then, to speak of Northern MacAlisters, Mackays, MacKenzies, MacIntoshes, etc., as "alien Scots" is a contradiction in terms. It is true that these early settlers were Gaelic speaking Catholics, but whatever may be the religion of their descendants, it is well to remember that they have as good a claim to their share of the land of Ireland as the O'Neills or the O'Briens themselves. Even our strongest advocates of local loyalties can hardly deny them their right to make a living in the North, seeing that, in settling there they returned, not alone to their native province, but actually to the very county which cradled their race.

LOWLANDERS JOIN THE COLONY

As has been pointed out before, the coming of the Islesmen broke the Gaelic polity in Antrim and Down. Later, by drawing down the wrath of Elizabeth upon themselves and their Irish allies, these same people gave the Government an excuse for removing other obstacles which would have interfered with

the foundations of the new state. For, when the queen found that her armies could do nothing against the Ulster Scots as long as they were able to obtain unlimited reinforcements from Scotland, she determined to make a plantation along the coastline which would shut the door in the faces of these "Redshanks." Three different plantations were attempted with such little success that they developed into mere punitive expeditions, a nauseating series of massacres, from which the Irish east of the Bann never recovered. The Scots, the greater sufferers, perhaps, were saved from annihilation by the fact that their friends and kinsmen the Stuart kings now ascended the English throne and proved themselves patrons and protectors of the Scottish race.

To the horror of Dublin Castle, no less than four baronies in Co. Antrim were granted by the new king James I. to Randal MacDonnell. To appease the British officials in Ireland, smaller estates were given to Chichester, Phillips and other Englishmen, but the Scots fared best; large tracts of land formerly held by the Irish now passing to the Hamiltons and Montgomerys of Ayrshire and to the Adairs of Wigton who welcomed settlers from the Lowlands. Emigration from Scotland increased and even Randal MacDonnell, himself a Catholic, provided land for great numbers of his Presbyterian fellow-countrymen, and paid ministers to look after their spiritual welfare. Thus was laid down in the east that strong base on which modern Ulster rests, with Carrickfergus, then, for its chief fortress "one of the ancientest and best effected in Ireland, and all the inhabitants Protestants." All this had been accomplished before the flight of the Earls had made the Ulster Plantation possible, but we know from Mr. Dobb's famous "Account of Antrim" written as late as the year 1683, that, in that year, though some of the wealthiest people of the town of Carrickfergus were English, "The greatest number of the Inhabitants are Scotch Presbyterians."

The settlements made in these two counties were a success

because it was as natural for a Scotsman of the early 17th century, dissatisfied with life at home, to follow his fellow-countrymen into Antrim or Down as it was for an Irishman of the last generation to seek his fortune in America. America has absorbed our Irish emigrants and these newcomers would have been assimilated by us (as were the Danes and the Normans before them) but for the Ulster Plantation. In that fact lies the significance of this plantation which in itself was more of a failure than a success.

Waves of Gaelicism washed the boundaries of English plantations in other parts of Ireland gradually wearing them away or else they were completely submerged during a period of storm, but in the North the six counties acted as a breakwater cutting off Antrim and North Down from the rest of Ireland so that the people who settled on the depopulated lands there remained sheltered from Irish influence. In this way every circumstance which contributed to the partial success of the Ulster Plantation was of vital importance also to the development of British interests in the North-east.

PLANTERS AND PLANTED

Of the thirty-two precincts into which the land of Ulster was divided for plantation purposes, only nine were given to Scottish undertakers, and on this account efforts have been made to prove that, even in the early critical days, the people of Scotland played a very unimportant part in the founding of the new Ulster. The success of a plantation, however, depends on the man who tills the soil, and there is no doubt but that the Scottish, because of the characteristic industry of the race, made the better colonists. At the very outset, when none but the "scum of both nations" had offered themselves the Scots quickly demonstrated their superiority. Even Chichester, ever jealous of the king's attachment to the men of his own race, had to admit in 1609 that while the British undertakers "gave small hope," the Scots came "with greater part

and better accompanied and attended." Pynar, travelling Ulster in 1618-1619, corroborates this early commendation of the Lord Deputy in reporting that "were it not for the Scottish tenants that do plough in many places of that country the people of Ulster would starve."

Living as they did in constant fear of foreign invasion or local revolt, the English settlers at first showed little inclination for work the fruits of which they felt must either perish in the conflict or else provide provisions and shelter for the native enemy. But the government refused to let them rest, and by 1618, a great deal had been accomplished. According to Pynar's report, 8,000 men servitors, freeholders, agents, leaseholders and cottagers were then available for the defence of the Plantation and 126 castles together with 1,897 houses of the English type had been built. Labour was cheap, the soil good, and fear of the old inhabitants was gradually giving place to contempt for a subject race whose numbers increased as their estates diminished.

From the year 1628, the fortunes of the Ulster settlement ceased to occupy a conspicuous place in the calendar of Irish State Papers. The plantation had become an accepted fact to all but the dispossessed Irish who continued to harrass the planters who had robbed them of "their principalities, their territories, their fruitful harbours and their fishful bays." Hatred for those who had robbed them of their inheritance was not the only nor perhaps even the chief cause for the rebellion of 1641, but that passion combined with the homeless and poverty-stricken condition to which the plantation had condemned many of the best born of Ulster filled the patriot armies with willing recruits.

A few short weeks of conflict, and the labour and expenditure of thirty-one long years had to all appearances gone for nought. The Province was filled with frightened hosts of men, women and children who fled from the wrath of the insurgent Irish so that all foreigners were soon locked up in the walled towns

of Ulster, just as they had been in Tudor days before, at the cost of thousands of English lives and untold English wealth, Gaelic Ireland had been wrenched from the Irish chiefs. But the end was not yet.

Forty-five years before the insurrection of 1641, just such another storm had swept over the plantation of Munster, driving patentees, freeholders and cottagers before it from the ruins of their newly-acquired homes. They left never to return, for the blow fell before the settlement had time to take deep root in the soil. In Ulster, on the contrary, during thirty odd years of comparative peace, many had grown to manhood and to womanhood who knew no other home but Ireland, while others had almost forgotten the land of their birth. Driven from Ulster by the forces of another O'Neill, these Northern British, unlike their Southern compatriots regarded themselves as exiles in Scotland and England, where they anxiously awaited the English victory which would enable them to return to those fields and homes which their labours had enriched.

A far larger proportion of Irish than of resident British were killed during the dreadful years which followed the rebellion. Before the wars of the Confederation, in spite of confiscation, emigration, disease and starvation, the Irish population altogether outnumbered the settlers, but when peace was restored the relative population was only about four to three in favour of the Irish, and this small advantage was easily outweighed by the fact that the land, influence and political power were all in the hands of the lesser number.

ASSIMILATION AND DISINTEGRATION

Not all the settlers on Northern lands were of the criminal type who normally followed in the wake of the foreign planter in Ireland. Washington's soldiers and the United Irishmen had forebears other than "the scum of two nations." Unsettled conditions of life in Scotland, due to religious persecutions, forced quite decent men to take part in this plantation scheme.

Many ministers, men who sacrificed every prospect of worldly success rather than bow to the royal will in religious matters, fled to Ireland knowing that a common danger would ensure them a certain measure of toleration from the Protestants of Ulster.

That toleration was short-lived. Having more to lose, the Presbyterians, at times, suffered even worse persecution than their Catholic neighbours and King William's victory at the Boyne, regarded as a special triumph by what in popular acceptance constitutes the modern Ulsterman, was followed in that day by such harsh treatment of the settlers that thousands of families were forced to flee to the American colonies. As exiles in America, they were foremost in the fight for independence there and later, when the feverish desire for freedom caught from revolutionary France coursed through the veins of Catholic Irish and Presbyterian Scots they stood together in the ranks of the United Irishmen and the government trembled knowing that a prolonged alliance between native and settler would mean the end of British rule in Ireland.

Strong measures were taken to meet this new danger. An undisciplined militia, let loose on the province, tortured and slew with impartiality both Catholics and Presbyterians, until goaded beyond the limited human endurance the United Irishmen tried to meet force with force. The rebellion of 1798 broke the political power of the Northern Presbyterians, and the new Orange Society, dominated by the great landowners, with its early teaching describable only as a fanatical gospel of hate, destroyed the life's work of Tone's friends.

As the landlord class declined it seemed as though the religious hatred fostered by them must break down in the new and more liberal way of life. Unfortunately, however, the commercial magnate of the city was ready by then to take the landowner's place in the political world. The extent of the active participation of an alien government in the work of perpetuating religious or quasi-racial antagonisms may remain

largely a question of opinion, but it is obvious that the interests of the Belfast employers were best served by increased dissension between two bodies of men who, once permitted to unite, would undoubtedly combine in a campaign against their employers for the attainment of fair treatment for themselves and their dependants.

If history were to repeat itself in the north, another alliance between native and settler, scattering the gloom of a religious hatred so unnatural in its origin, a few short years should suffice to make the two peoples one. Already the rival parties have more in common than they themselves realize. The Orangemen in boasting of his Scottish ancestry unconsciously supports the theory that, historically speaking, he and his political opponents are kinsmen, and it must be admitted that whatever their proportional numbers may have been it was not the English but the more vigorous Scottish settlers who stamped their characteristics upon the Northern counties. Neither in his faults nor in his virtues does the Ulster Presbyterian in any way resemble the modern Englishman. How foreign even his misplaced zeal would appear in the land of eternal compromise ! A clever exploitation of these un-English qualities by astute politicians has made partition possible ; but it is these same qualities which constitute our best hope for the future since they will undoubtedly hasten that complete assimilation of the Northern settlers within the life of the nation without which no political unification can ever give the people of Ireland that normal healthy national life which the more fortunate European countries have enjoyed for seven or eight hundred years.

SHEILA KENNEDY.

THE CHORUS CONDOLES WITH ADMETUS

A Lyric from Euripides : Alcestis, lines 962-1005.

Art have I probed and Metaphysic,
Have talked and talked and talked again,
Yet never cured Necessity's ache,
Nor found a nostrum for her pain,
In all the books, from end to end,
Orpheus, the Thracian poet, penned !
Nor any charm, nor any rebus,
Of all the wise Asclepiades
Had from their great fore-father Phoebus
The sufferings of man to ease !

Necessity, without an altar
Or shrine for human praying to,
For sacrifices will not palter
With things which Zeus would have her do.
Oh mighty Goddess, draw not near
To me ! I have enough to fear.
The iron of Chalybeate mining
Must break when thou wouldst have it broke :
Nor any threat, nor all repining,
Shall ever make thee miss a stroke.

Now she has laid her hands upon you
And gripped you fast, you must submit :
For all who go below are gone, you
By tears may never alter it.
Even of gods the children go
To death and darkness down below.
You loved your wife while she was living :
Loved let her still be in the grave !
And thank your lucky stars for giving
A wife as noble as they gave !
And be her grave not lightly treated—
As of some undistinguished dead—
But as were there a goddess seated,
By all and sundry worshippéd !
The traveller, upon his way,
Lighting upon her tomb shall say :
"This lady for her husband perished,
And now partakes unending bliss.
Oh, be I by you, lady, cherished !"
The prayer he utters shall be this.

H. O. M.

THE GAELIC TRADITION IN LITERATURE

PART II.

ONLY in Elizabethan times did the bards—and that means the whole system, chieftains, poets, historians, lawgivers—become aware of the disaster that threatened them, but this did not make any of them enquire the reason for it. We can hardly wonder at this when modern historians like Mrs. Green take up the position that a great culture was being deliberately destroyed by English barbarians, but it does hinder us from feeling the pathos, the very great pathos, of the poems they wrote when they began to feel that the heavens themselves were falling. Or rather, the pathos is different from that intended by the poets: it is not a tragedy we participate in, but one we observe.

‘My son,’ says Mahun O hIfearnain in a poem edited by O’Grady, ‘cultivate not the poetic art—the profession of thine ancestors before thee forsake utterly; though to her first of all honour is rightly due, Poetry henceforth is portent of misery. . . . Praise no man, nor any satirise—but and if thou praise, laud not a Gael; to him that perchance would fain do so, to chant a panegyric of the Gael means odium earned. Break with them—their keen valour quote not, nor call to mind lore of their chronicles; take not the course of bestowing commendation on the Gael, before whom be all other men accounted.’

That is moving verse, but everyone who quotes it misses the essential point: that the poet assumes that the man of the fifth century with one leg in Paganism and the other in Christianity is the real man, and that the poetry of the fifth century which knew but two themes for song, praise and blame (‘praise no man nor any satirist’) is the real poetry.

Behind this attitude there was not only a religious faith, there was also a superb arrogance. Not only the poets, lawgivers,

historians and musicians, but their patrons were blinded by scorn, hatred and rage for everything that was not of Gaelic origin. Why should they study foreign tongues? 'The chronicles of the race of Gael Glais,' says one of the bards dryly, 'are not to be found in English or in Welsh.' And that arrogance filtered down into folklore. In 'Songs of the Hebrides' there is a story of one of the Mac Neills of Barra. Every evening a trumpeter went up to the tower of Mac Neill's castle and proclaimed 'Ye princes and potentates of the earth, take heed. Mac Neill of Barra has dined. The rest of the world may now dine !'

The Irish aristocracy, tied up in their tradition, suggest themselves to me as characters from some play by Pirandello ; deceiving the bards and allowing themselves to be deceived in turn. For though Mac Neill might send up his trumpeter to proclaim to the world that it might dine (and many of them did things equally absurd), to-morrow or the next day he would experience a sinking in his stomach, his appetite would fail, and at night a voice would whisper in his ear that the world cared nothing for him or his proclamations. Then he would send for his bard who would write a poem, praising his countenance and his castle, his clear eye, his charming manner, his godlike generosity, and nobility, his valour in war ; would proclaim afresh that never had eye seen a house 'wherein were more golden jewels, more serving men, more spencers of noble birth'—and MacNeill, the harried and bewildered god of the primitive world, would sleep better, would wake with a better appetite, would look again with complacency on his old castle and its parasites, and see them as the bard had painted them. That is the very charge one of the bards, in an unusual poem edited by Professor O'Rahilly, brings against his fellows. 'To an ugly, diminutive creature,' he declares, 'you will say "Lovelier than every child of woman ! Taller than every hero !" You add curls to the bald forehead and praise some blinking, squint-eyed fellow for having an eye clear as crystal ;

while of sheep-stealer and chicken-snatcher you say "Ireland shall be governed by his stewards." It is of course an argument to bring against all court poetry, but court poetry is seldom taken so seriously. The libels of the English propagandist will be fresh in my readers' minds, but they are worth repeating because they are astonishingly like the bard's.

'If they see any young man descended of the septs of the O's or Mac's, and have half a dozen about him, then they will make him a rhyme wherein they will commend his father and his ancestors. . . . and in the end they will compare him to Hannibal or Scipio or Hercules or some other famous person, wherewithal the poor fool runs mad and thinks indeed 'tis so.'

Self deception! When the English wished to set these Hannibals and Scipios by the ears they sent along a bard, Aonghus of the Satires, as he was known because of his bitter tongue, and Aonghus, sitting at their tables, belittled his reception and their state until he drove them to try and enrich themselves by a cattle raid upon their neighbours' territory. A cattle raid, mark you, the only method of warfare known to the primitive world, and not to anything more serious from the English point of view. This is intelligible enough when we examine the mild epigrams of which they stood in such mortal terror. Here is one, and by the same Aonghus.

O sparrow above on the bough,
Though little the morsel you lack
One night in the house of O'Keeffe
And your belly would tickle your back.

It is interesting to note that Aonghus perished by a stab delivered by one of O'Meagher's servants, who preferred to take on himself the terrible crime of bardicide, rather than permit so utter a destruction of his master's honour.

No picture of this society would be complete without a reference to the *Contention of the Bards*. Immediately after the battle of Kinsale—at which the Irish aristocracy received its first and most stunning blow—there arose a dispute between

the literati as to whether Northern or Southern Ireland took precedence. In faultless verse these learned lunatics solemnly contested every fable regarding the mythical brothers Ebher and Eireamhon, who, according to legend had divided the country between them. The contest began in a comparatively well-mannered way, but after a while the northern bard threatens to call upon his neighbours who will pelt the southerner with what he calls the heavy showers of their learning. The southern bard sulks: let him call upon whom he will; he has told no more than the bare truth, and it is not his fault if Northern Ireland is a shabby old place, and its heroes are good-for-nothings. The northerner continues to upbraid, and then arises a new champion from the south, inflamed with righteous indignation. 'Go on,' he says, 'give us more of it. Stick to your own side! Don't consider our feelings! You will not persuade me by your sham kindness. The south doesn't need you to praise it. I pardon you—may God, too, pardon you—the lies you have told.'

Then—a wee glimmer of sense. Old Mahun o hIfearnain intervenes to point out in a rather apologetic manner that it is very little use for them to fight: the English dog has got away with the bone.

After reading a few hundred pages of this sort of thing, one cannot be surprised that the Irish were defeated or that under this obtuse and arrogant aristocracy no popular culture ever merged. For one can be very certain that this arrogance of theirs affected not only the English, who were quite unable to come to terms with it, but the common people of Ireland, and that far more deeply, because it imposed upon them an inferiority complex they have not yet recovered from. A seventeenth century satire like *The Parliament of Clan Thomas* was not, as it is generally assumed to be, an attack upon the English settlers, but the common Irish people who were trying to set themselves up and live decent, normal lives. Far greater than the tyranny of the English was the tyranny of the Irish

aristocracy because it blocked the normal development of the people which the invasions ineffectually hindered.

We must remember that it was the invasions which actually created the new standards, the new interests, the new necessities ; a whole vital communal existence such as we see mirrored in a town like Kilkenny ; and because the aristocracy rejected these things the people were denied them. 'Clan Thomas,' says *The Parliament* angrily, 'sent their children to school and educated them for the church, and not content with that had them taught rhetoric and natural philosophy, and had their daughters trained in silk work and samplers.'

No, I believe the correct picture is that given by the Nuncio, Rinuccini, of an abject spiritless people 'No other nation in Europe is less given to industry or is more phlegmatic than this . . . they do not concern themselves with ecclesiastical or political amelioration.' And that, mark you, during a religious war ! Even the priests, if McArthur and O'Clery in one generation and Hackett and Keating in another, are fair examples were more interested in the tradition than in church or state. Hackett, for instance, went to Louvain, and there in the heart of European civilisation he writes four lines that tell us more of him than the rest of his work put together. Here, he says, he is looked down on by the natives, but if those who despise him are wise men then the people in Ireland must be dunces ! Simple-minded was Rinuccini's word for them.

But that century was not to pass without a change, and our testimony is David O Bruadair, as cantankerous a specimen of the traditionalist as ever handled a pen. He is a measure of the fall of the aristocracy since Kinsale. The bards of a hundred years before were rich men, richer than Milton or Shakespeare ; O Bruadair is a labourer and tramp, but with all the old arrogance and intransigence intact.

The aristocracy were finally defeated at Aughrim, and the nation shuddered and began to live. The leaders signed the Treaty of Limerick, and a number of people properly protested

that if the Irish army went oversea there was no guarantee that the provisions of the treaty would be fulfilled. They looked upon the leaders' behaviour as mere cowardice, and, refusing to accept the treaty, organised themselves in roving, irregular bands, rapparees. In his poems, O Bruadair satirised them, flayed them with his tongue, like a true bard, pelted them with the heavy showers of his learning from which they were fortunately protected by their ignorance of literary Irish. His poems are interesting principally because they show us for the first time this division in the nation becoming obvious. And one has to know Irish history to realise what a change it was to put the aristocrats on the defensive.

'If,' says O Bruadair, 'the story of the conflict were set on paper without malice or pride, and all the Irish nobles lost by it, it were no sin to inscribe in song that the bargain they made was no cowardly compromise.

'The gentlemen that followed the cause and in spite of hardships suffered the slippery hills—I cannot see what shame it was for them to go oversea, even though they were offered concessions at home.

'From the time'—and here is what really hurt O Bruadair—'the children of serfs began to grow proud, neither woodland nor bawn has been safe from their billetings. Alas, that no one punished the rapacity of the rapparees till those they ruined were driven to the wilds.'

And he entitled another poem 'Sir John Fitzgerald's Complaint of his failing followers at the said Sir John's going to sea for France, *being attended by none of his ancient dependants to their shame and perpetual infamy.*'

Irish democracy has been born.

From the same period, occasioned by the same event, perhaps even written in the same place as O Bruadair's crabbed rhymes comes a song of absolute simplicity in the Irish of the people. It is the song of one of Sarsfield's soldiers, one of the common lot O Bruadair despised though a hundred O Bruadairs

never wrote anything as good as it. Do I deceive myself in thinking that into it has gone the whole thwarted genius of the Irish people, the genius which has yet grown to nothing like its full height? Read it beside O Bruadair's poem. O Bruadair is enveloped in self deception while the soldier goes straight for actuality, the thing poor Irishmen and women, slinking away to the English towns had for generations been seeking. Here is journalism.

Good luck, Patrick Sarsfield, wherever you may roam,
 You crossed the seas to France and left empty camps at home
 To plead our cause before many a foreign throne
 Though you left ourselves and poor Ireland overthrown—
 Och, ochone !

Patrick Sarsfield, 'tis yourself that was sent to us by God,
 And holy is the earth that your feet ever trod ;
 May the sun and the white moon light your way,
 You trounced King Billy and won the day—
 Och, ochone !

Patrick Sarsfield, with you goes the prayer of every man,
 My own prayer, too, and the prayer of Mary's Son,
 As you passed through Birr the Narrow Ford you won—
 You beat them back at Cullen and took Limerick town—
 Och, ochone !

I'll climb the mountain, a lonely man,
 And I'll go east again if I can,
 'Twas there I saw the Irish ready for the fight ;
 The lousy crowd that wouldn't unite—
 Och, ochone !

Who's that I see now, yonder on Howth Head?
 ' One of Jamie's soldiers, sir, now the king has fled ;
 Last year with gun and knapsack I marched with joyous tread,
 And this year, sir, I'm begging my bread—
 Och, ochone !

Great God, when I think how Diarmuid was taken,
 His flesh wrenched asunder, his standard broken !
 And God himself couldn't fight His way through
 When they chopped off his head and held it in view—
 Och, ochone !

The fumes were choking when the house went alight,
 And Black Billy's heroes were warming to the fight,
 And every shell that came, wherever it lit,
 Colonel Mitchell asked was Lord Lucan hit—

Och, ochone !

Many and many a soldier, all proud and gay,
 Seven weeks ago they passed this very way,
 With their guns and their swords and pikes on show,
 And now in Aughrim they're lying low—

Och, ochone !

Kelly has manure that's neither lime nor sand,
 But sturdy young soldiers stretched over his land,
 The lads we left behind us in Aughrim that day,
 Torn like horsemeat by the dogs where they lay—

Och, ochone !

This poem marks the beginning of the Irish nation, not, unfortunately, the end of the Gaelic tradition. The bards lingered on, more ragged, more obtuse, more arrogant than ever, and the memory of their magical powers kept the country folk subject to them. We can still see the marks of the tradition, even on music. At the end of the eighteenth century a harper like old Hempson could boast that he had never played the compositions of Carolan, because Carolan's very beautiful music was influenced by foreign devils like Corelli and Vivaldi. And fifty years after Aughrim, Aogan O'Rahilly, writing his last bitter lines on a death bed made more terrible by savage destitution, could speak as though Ireland were not a people but a class.

For the ruin that has come upon the blood of kings
 Tears in a voiceful torrent plough an old man's face,
 And add their mournful tribute to the stream that springs
 Into the sea at Youghal and passes by this place.

This is the end. Death comes and will have no delay
 By Laune and Lene and Lee, diminished of their pride ;
 I shall go after the heroes, ay, into the clay—
 My fathers followed theirs before Christ was crucified.

In Munster the old world died in its sleep. From old man and women in West Cork one can still hear the lament which is perhaps even more than O'Rahilly's poems, the most perfect example of the tradition. The subject, Art O'Leary, was a colonel in the army of Marie Antoinette, the writer a woman whose sister, to use her own words, 'had gone across the water to be a king's companion,' but the poem itself is primitive poetry, the world it calls up is not that of Marie Antoinette's court—

My love and my fortune !
'Tis an evil portion
To lay for a giant—
A shroud and a coffin
For a big-hearted hero
Who fished in the hill-streams,
And drank in bright halls
With white-breasted women.

For an instant the new, raw, living Ireland looks in and as quickly disappears.

Yonder hangs your whip !
Your horse is at the door,
Follow the laneway east
Where every bush will bend,
And every stream dry up,
And man and woman bow
If things have manners yet
That have them not, I fear.

And the last cadence is a memory of the bardic school, where young poets practised their art in pitch-black rooms.

Cease your weeping now,
Women of the soft wet eyes,
Till Art O'Leary drink
Ere he go to the dark school,
No student of music or song—
A prop for the earth and the stone !

Here, as in O'Rahilly, the tradition has been galvanised

for a moment into life by sheer passion, but for the most part it is a sorry business. Ragged, stupid arrogant old men called together schools of poetry, and the labourer and blacksmith, still despising the world about them, addressed one another in flowery rhymes.

Make me me a spade-handle, straight as the mast of a ship,
Seumas you clever man, witty and bountiful,
Sprung, through the Geraldine lords, from the kings of Greece,
Then fix me the treadle and send me home the tool.

Meanwhile in the strip of territory adjoining the east coast and in the towns that had been English-speaking for generations the new spirit, the spirit of Sarsfield's soldier, was spreading. The movement culminated in the rebellion of '98 and in the east coast ballad poetry which is popular in a sense in which Irish poetry scarcely ever is.

FRANK O'CONNOR.

ARS NOVA

Irish Music in the Shaping

“ ‘LAND of Song,’ said the warrior bard.” Nor was Moore the first, nor last, to pay flattering tributes to music in Ireland, tributes which were the delight of its historian, the late Grattan Flood. Other countries have been less fortunate. England is still the “land without music,” despite three decades of the new school of composition and achievements second to none in contemporary music. Neither in Germany—steeped since the War in a close conservatism—nor in France, nor Italy, is English music given the consideration which is its due. “*Frisia non cantat*”—the English have been importing music and musicians for over two centuries, and people are slow to believe that they are in a position to export both now. Whereas, Irish folk-song and the bardic music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seems to have fixed itself on the popular imagination, lending to this country a reputation for musical culture which it does not yet possess. Nicely-turned phrases, such as “our music-loving people,” and “our heritage of music,” have made this legend a household word. Nobody likes to hear that *this* is the land without music, a land that is literally music-starved.

It is not a question of the fundamental postulate. Somehow one never doubts the inherent musicality of the Irish people. One feels instinctively that they are more musical, in the vague sense of the word, than the English. But music here is not in the air, chiefly because there is no substratum of sound musicianship. The intelligentsia does not give music a thought. Among the votaries of art the musician is a rare bird, something of a stranger in more elite company, sensing incongruities which musicians in more evenly-developed surroundings are spared.

For the masses, music means entertainment, merely. If this is true elsewhere, it is far truer in Ireland, where practically the whole field of music is dominated by this conception, and subordinate to it. The other arts are free from similar humiliation—nobody expects a picture-gallery, or a sheaf of Æ’s

poems, to provide amusement. But everybody comes clamouring for amusement to a concert. Discrimination is not made between the music of the concert-hall—music proper—and such species of music as cater for those who wish to be amused, namely, dance music, café music, variety-hall music, musical comedy, and so on, none of which have anything more to do with art-music than a popular weekly paper has to do with literature, than a Christmas pantomime has to do with drama, or a picture-poster with painting. In all these cases there is no attempt at art, but merely a commercial desire to please. People fail to realise that it is not the function of music to entertain an indiscriminate public. If good music gives pleasure, such pleasure is incidental, not its purpose. The purpose of music is rather to express ideas, just as literature does, in terms of emotional experience, to tell a spiritual tale, to express an outlook, a philosophy, not in a direct, tangible language, but in a language that is too subtle, too elusive to be translated into words.

Bad commercial music, however, rules the roost, not because of inherent bad taste, but because of an inherent mental inertia. Commercial music can be appreciated without effort, it has a conventional, commonplace idiom. It can be listened to in that state of indolence which comes at the close of a day's work. It is apprehensible by the senses rather than by the intellect, it demands no energy such as must be spent in thought. Whereas music proper requires an alert mind for its understanding, almost as much activity on the part of the listener as of the performer. It presupposes that one has made the effort to familiarise oneself with its idiom. And this is the great stumbling block, for where the significance of music is not properly understood, such effort will rarely be made. Many who have learned to understand the idiom of the classical period will be indisposed to move further, to understand the idiom of the present day.

There is a fundamental issue at stake. The musical language

of three or four generations back can become a natural and intelligible medium of expression, learnt just as a child, growing up, will learn from hearing a language spoken. But it is necessary to realise that this language must and will change from generation to generation. In ordinary language the spoken word has a definite relationship to a particular thing or order existing in nature, and its form may change somewhat in a couple of centuries. But on the whole the word itself and the mode of combining it with other words will remain the same, because the concepts underlying these words—the concepts “rock” or “stone” or “tree”—will not change. Whereas in music, sound has no relationship to things existing in the physical order. Hence the composition and combination of sound will always be in a state of flux, because they are symbols which are not tied down, each one to a definite idea. The best composers will launch out into modes of expression which have not been used before, modes which it may take some time to understand. This perpetual evanescence from the familiar into the unfamiliar makes music what it is. As Beethoven says, “Music is the only incorporeal entrance to a higher world of knowledge.” The other arts arrive at this higher knowledge by a corporeal entrance—since their symbolism is related to the physical order—but music, being incorporeal, has a remote, elusive way of its own of getting at an inner world of meaning. Its very essence lies in the ever-changing subtlety with which it can get inside the word, so to speak, and make the most hidden implications of an idea as clear as day.

For all that, music is not difficult of access, though it must seem so to a community which conceives art-music as something strange and aloof. The appreciation of music, as of any other art, is not dependent on technical knowledge. No more is needed than to steep oneself in its medium, occupying one’s mind with work after work, until the language appears co-ordinate, until the messages it conveys become pregnant

with significance. But this presupposes manifold opportunities of hearing music, and the stimulation afforded by the presence of a vigorous musical activity. Without such activity a sympathetic public can never be expected, because it is the supply which brings the understanding and the demand.

Here in Ireland the amount of musical activity is as yet almost negligible. With the exception of a small orchestra in the Dublin Radio Station and a more impressive unit in the Belfast Station, there is not a professional orchestra in the country, *i.e.*, a permanent body performing several times a week, and giving whole-time employment to a number of professional musicians. Whereas on the Continent, every city of Dublin's size will be found to support at least two permanent orchestras—apart from numerous amateur orchestras—and a permanent orchestra, perhaps on a smaller scale, will be found in cities no larger than Limerick or Waterford. In the absence of orchestras there can be no adequate musical development, since the greater half of music is dependent on the medium of the orchestra. As regards vocal music, opera is practically non-existent, except for local effort, and the number of choral societies is so small as to be out of all proportion to the population of our cities. The performance of church music is on a level with prevailing conditions, nor is it too much to say that the style of the music cultivated is usually nearer to musical comedy than to the chant of the Church. Finally, there is little or no family music-making or “house-music,” as it is known on the Continent, which, above all other species of music-making, permeates a people most thoroughly with a true musical culture. The lust for public performance swallows up the music of the homes, and this lack of private initiative is all the sadder because the most valuable type of music, perhaps, is that music which is performed within the intimacy of a family circle.

A new wave of interest and enthusiasm is indeed perceptible, but the majority of the enthusiasts, when they speak of music, mean traditional music, bidding us measure progress by the

amount of folk music played and sung. Composition is conceived as the adding of three parts to a folk-tune. Centuries of development in craft and idiom are ignored. Surely it is a poor story if the Ireland of the present day—and a Gaelic thinking, even Gaelic speaking Ireland at that—could not begin to express herself as truly and as individually in the language of contemporary music as the Ireland of two or three centuries ago expressed herself, not in the *art-language* of that time, but naturally and spontaneously in a simpler, melodic language. And such new expression, though breathing the spirit of the traditional music, need not have the remotest connection with its externalia in form or manner. Elgar, nothing if not English, Sibelius, the very embodiment of Finnish tradition, have never used an English nor a Finnish folk-tune, nor any fragment that was not their own. Continuity or fidelity of tradition is not best achieved by atavism, by a slavish use of the material of the past. While welcoming the spread of Irish traditional music among the people and in the schools, while having a profound respect for the work of preserving and embellishing this centuries-old music (provided it be the work of thorough-going scholars and musicians), we must remember that the task before us lies in the larger and more important field of art-music, lies in raising it from the half-baked, shoddy thing it is, in establishing contacts with contemporary movements, in making of music a medium for the expression of the life of present-day Ireland, by the use of present-day methods elsewhere.

Conditions have hitherto been such that musicians of ability have found it almost impossible to remain. The wild geese of music include among their number every prominent name in Irish music of the past. Taking composers alone, Field, Balfe, Wallace, Stanford, Harty—without exception they left, as young men, to bestow their talents on the rest of Europe. Material opportunity and support were essential for their activities, and this they could not find at home. Until such

support is forthcoming, until we have developed conditions here to a point comparable with conditions, say, in Sweden, Holland, Switzerland—countries without particular distinction in music, but culturally sound—we cannot hope to conserve any talent we produce.

To start with, we must take the social and structural side of the question into account. Here the most immediate issue is the problem of how to create an efficient body of music teachers, for in their hands lies the training of musician and of amateur, it is they who set the standard for the individual and the public alike. Yet the incompetence, the utter lack of responsibility in music-teaching in Ireland is such as no other profession or trade here would tolerate. Primarily this arises from the low standard in music which prevails all-round, but it can equally well be regarded as the cause. There seems little hope of recovery from our present plight until music is converted into a serious craft, until it ceases to be a general hunting-ground, an El Dorado for young ladies covetous of pin-money. Doctors, solicitors, dentists, must go through long courses of apprenticeship prescribed by their various councils, and fulfil standard tests before they are entitled to practise on the public. Carpenters, masons, plumbers, tradesmen of all kinds must serve their time for a period varying from five to seven years before they can earn a working-man's wages. And all these professions and trades are protected to a certain extent from inexperienced workmanship without any standard of efficiency being enforced, because the public is alive to material results—everybody reacts to a toothache or to a leaking water-chute. Whereas the music teacher, with two months' experience or two years—it scarcely matters which—can warp and misdirect the minds of unfortunate children, nor will anybody be the wiser, for the public is not sufficiently educated or cognisant of standards to judge. Obviously it is for the musicians themselves to come together and to protect their own ranks, as well as the public, from quackery and imposture. It is in their own

best interests to form an organisation such as those which protect the professions and the trades, to secure the ultimate enforcement of definite qualifications, and to secure that the heterogeneous and untrustworthy collection of diplomas now current may at length give way to a single minimum qualification. Details of what organisation of this kind might achieve are scarcely of interest to the general reader. He may even dismiss such policy as smacking of pedantry, of trades-unionism. But where music is not a natural, vigorous growth, where one must combat with professional charlatanism on the one hand and the dilettantism of the traditionalists on the other, there seems no other effective way of tackling the situation.

It is purposeless to talk or write about a musical revival unless determined action be the burden of one's theme. Without a decisive betterment in general conditions, all hopes of a revival can be dismissed. But it may act as a spur to our endeavour if we realise that the time was never more opportune. As Cecil Forsyth pointed out some years ago, music, alone among the arts, fails to spring into life amid the stress of national conflict, and this because of the inherent distinction, already referred to, between music and the other arts. Poetry, painting, sculpture are dependent on external stimuli—on men, places, events, colours, forms—and in times of political aspiration, of conquest, or of turmoil the imagination of the poet or painter is fired by the new visions which take shape, by the possibilities which dawn when great movements pull men's minds this way or that. The chief political awakenings of history have coincided, on the whole, with outbursts of art and literature, with expression in every field but that of music. When poets, dramatists, painters, sculptors have come in flocks, confirming the manifestations of some people's resilient energy, music alone, like a sulking child, has refused to appear, unmoved by the coaxing of her more responsive brethren, until the tumult has died down. For music relies on the inner vision, she is

blind to the external world, making a readier appearance when strife has eased, during a time of repose and reflection.

Such a time is now to hand in Ireland. The intense nationalist awakening which culminated in 1916, bringing literature and painting in its wake, seems to have subsided into a lull. A period of comparative tranquillity is assured, a period of "interiorisation" rather than "exteriorisation," when energy hitherto expended in political ferment may take an inward course, expressing itself solely in terms of intellectual and spiritual activity. This is the very time in which music may be expected to germinate, a moment of poise after age-long, internal conflict. This is the time in which a new tradition may take shape, not based on forms outworn, but sweeping the meagre life which these still hold into warm vigorous currents of vitality, opening to the winds that blow, expanding endlessly. Such is new tradition, out of the old.

ALOYS FLEISCHMANN.

LADY GREGORY

It is twenty-seven years since I first met Lady Gregory. I had been summoned from the country, a very young man, to consult with her and Mr. Yeats about some job in connection with the Abbey Theatre. The job turned out to be that of making me its manager and producer. I met her in the Nassau Hotel, long since extinct, it was above where Messrs. Hodges and Figgis now have their book-shop. Mr. Yeats was not in when I arrived and she entertained me meanwhile in their private sitting-room. She spoke at once and eagerly of his latest work, of how he had put his prose play "The Golden Helmet" into rhymed verse and she praised it enthusiastically. Later I was to learn how characteristic it was of her to be eager about the work of young Irish writers, of Padraic Colum and James Stephens and, years later, of Sean O'Casey.

It would seem natural that when I think of her I should think of her mostly in connection with that Theatre which she helped to found and did so much to sustain through many troublesome years ; think of her sitting in the stalls—when she was in Dublin she rarely missed a performance and could see an old play six nights running with a matinee thrown in ; think of her in the green-room chatting with the players, entertaining them with tea and a colossal barn-brack baked in her kitchen, which she had lugged up from County Galway ; or think of her in the Theatre's office signing cheques and grappling acutely with the Theatre's many fretting affairs. Yet I think of her most often in her country home at Gort—though I was there but three or four times. A large, but unpretentious country-house crowded with treasures. Its library—a lovely room with the shelves of books presented to her by their authors, the staircase walls covered with prints and drawings each of some special interest, the staircase was a history in itself. Coole Park—that was its name—played a large part in modern Irish literature. There George Moore and Edward Martyn and Mr. Yeats

discussed the beginnings of our Theatre, there that difficult collaboration was undertaken between George Moore and Mr. Yeats, they must have been a difficult pair to drive in tandem. Douglas Hyde was a frequent visitor and wrote some of his plays there, Mr. Yeats' beautiful book, "The Wind Among the Reeds," might never have been finished had it not been for Coole and her, later Mr. Bernard Shaw was to stay there and it is significant that one of the acts of "Back to Methuselah" is placed in County Galway. Artists came there, too—her son Robert was a painter of great distinction, and his death in the war was a great loss to Irish art. There was a famous tree in the garden on which if you were sufficiently distinguished you were allowed to cut your initials and there is an A.J. for Augustus John and an incisive G.B.S. and Jack B. Yeats and Sean O'Casey and many another. Some Americans called one afternoon, parents and a very young man. Bored by the conversation, the youth wandered into the garden and seeing the scored tree could not resist adding his initials. There was consternation, but Lady Gregory consoled herself by the reflection that he must end by becoming President of the United States or at least a judge of the Supreme Court.

Widowed early, she always dressed in black and at night would wear a black mantilla over her beautiful grey hair with one jewel hanging on her breast. She had the most limpid, beautiful brown eyes I have ever seen. She was small—and always reminded me of Queen Victoria (and how she would have hated the comparison!), she was not handsome but she was utterly distinguished. She was never wealthy, was very simple in her manner of living but was a great lady in the best sense of the word. I thought her elderly when I met her first; but in twenty years she hardly seemed to change: old age came on her very late.

The Theatre had been started for some years before she began to write for it, first of all little comedies, for it needed laughter. Her first comedy was amateurish, but with the second she showed her genius. Her plays followed rapidly; masterpieces

of comedy, such as "Spreading the News," "The Rising of the Moon," "Hyacinth Halvey" and "The Image." A series of Irish folk-history plays; lovely fantasies, such as "The Dragon;" plays about Don Quixote, Parnell, Christ. I think no Irish author can have caused so little pain to her fellow-countrymen, for though there are many scamps and rascals in her work she loved human nature and character too much to be unkind and though she could be pitiless in her dealings with her fellowmen, she could always discover some saving grace in her blackest villains. Some of her later work was overloaded, her feeling for dialogue was sometimes too exuberant to make for swift action, her cargo was so rich and abundant, she could not bear ever to lighten the ship and sail under bare poles.

She was a Gaelic scholar to some extent and a good nationalist, though she took no active part in politics. Her contribution to Ireland was the Irish Theatre, she stuck to it through thick and thin, through good times and bad ones. George Moore and Edward Martyn might drop out, players leave, managers change, Mr. Yeats might live in England, Lady Gregory held on. If she had consulted her personal feeling she would have liked best to live the year round at Coole among the woods she loved so much and so carefully tended, but though the primroses might be in bloom and the young trees budding if the Theatre demanded her services she took the next train to Dublin.

Coming back from the theatre one night, in the middle of the Black and Tán troubles, escorted to her tram by the Theatre's Secretary, there was an ambush and a volley of shots. People fled in all directions and the Secretary said: "Lie down, Lady Gregory." She drew herself to the full of her small height and said, as loudly as she could: "Up the Rebels!" And on another occasion in a tram when there was a hold-up she knelt on the seat staring out, softly clapping her hands and singing softly a patriotic song.

She was a great writer, the greatest Irish woman writer I can think of; at any rate she was a great Irishwoman.

LENNOX ROBINSON.

THE TALE

I dipped my quill in beauty yesternight
And wrote, I know not how, an antique tale
Of love, and gardens, and the dewy light
Of summer moons ; such as the nightingale
Might warble in cool coverts between storms
Of golden-fluted passionate despairs.
And there were copses, where the firefly swarms
Kindled a faery glow, and mossy lairs
Warm for our lovers, and the tale moved slow
Through some few thorny ways and natural pain,
To happy endings. It smells sweeter so,
Laughing through tears like birds in April rain.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Since the invaders have torn
branches and lands and sun out of the sky
and children from their ancestry

Since there have been men who shot
out from behind her hedges, dangerously from roofs
rode bicycles to an ambush
built a whole island in the mind
and failed

Beeches have an angular look
liberty's fenced and split with wire
all freedom is framed in clouds.

DAVID QUINN

AN ULSTER ELYSIUM

SAID his friend, as the mainland receded and Rathlin grew close: "Poet, will you see in the waters of Moyne the raths, fleets and armies of a lost world?"

"No," said the poet. "Why should I?"

Then his friend took from his pocket a little pamphlet, a small early-19th century book of verse. He read:

"Behold yon bright Morgana rise,
A world of vapour, light and air,
With rosy bowers and vistas rare;
Where hapless Spenser might have seen
The gala of the tiny queen——

"That is not all," he said. "Many strange fancies follow, many poetic lines on the Elysium of Ultonia's land."

"Stop!" demanded the poet. Jealously he asked, "Who wrote that book?"

"An individual in humble circumstances," said the friend. "He dedicates it to the vicar."

Over the side of the boat, the poet studied the ocean. "I see no rosy bowers," he said, "no vistas rare. The man was an impostor."

"There's things to be seen in the waters," volunteered the steersman.

"There's things to be seen and I've seen them myself."

"I see a jellyfish," said the poet.

"And my father's father, he saw a battle once—a battle away down under the sea. They were fighting, and he saw them."

"Away out of that," said the poet. "That's no way to talk."

"He did so," said the boatman. "And he wished he had a lump of turf with him, for if you throw a sod of Ireland on what you see it stays set."

"That's right," confirmed the poet's friend. "It's in this little book."

"It's a lot of damned codology," said the poet.

"You claim to be a poet . . ." reproved his friend.

"And so I am a poet. I'm the best poet in the four provinces of Ireland. Didn't I tear the heart out of everyone with my Song of the Spinning frame?"

The boatman said he had a cousin wrote verse. "He invented a window lock, he did, and he put the description of it into rhymes, and he sent it to the Patents' Office, and they had to take it. It's all there, all in the records, and the Government printed it."

As the three fools talked the boat heaved on and neared the point of Doon. The poet looked at the water this time and that, for he had a small thought in his head that the boatman might be right, and his friend might be right, and even the individual in humble circumstances might be right. In one of these furtive peeps he saw in the sea a big slab of a rock, and he said:

"You were nearly into a rock." The boatman turned the tiller and the moment he did there was a great shock, and the three of them were in the water.

The poet and his friend, the boatman with them, saw a track of beaten earth winding through the forest of trees.

The poet said: "That road will lead to people."

"It must have been the bags of turf I was bringing to the island," the boatman reflected. "Didn't I tell you a sod of Irish soil would settle things?"

"We'll walk," said the poet, "until we come on something interesting."

He set out. The others followed him.

"That's sense," approved the boatman. "We'll walk until we come on something interesting."

"It should be sense," said the poet's friend. "He's a sensible poet, he's the Linen Trade Laureate."

The boatman was impressed. "That's grand," he said. "My sister is married on a man that works in Jennymount mill."

"What will we see?" asked the poet's friend.

"We'll see Cuchulain," said the poet.

The trees cleared and the path approached a line of thatched cottages.

"You're wrong," said the poet's friend to the poet. "You're tens of centuries out. Have a look at those cottages!"

"We'll see Cuchulain," insisted the poet. "It's always done, it's the recognised thing. Like 'Thompson in Tir na nOg.'"

They walked on, passed more small houses, and came to the centre of a George III town. Across the street from where they stood, wicker baskets were being loaded on a coach.

"God," sniffed the boatman, "the plumbing's terrible."

"Where are we?" asked the poet's friend.

"In Belfast town," the poet said. "D'ye see the White Cross Inn there along the street?—my grandfather's great grandfather keeps it."

"You said we'd take the coach," reminded the boatman. "What do we use for money?"

"We're ghosts," said the poet. "We need no money."

"D'ye tell me now?" said the boatman. He crossed the street and kicked a man loading the coach.

The fellow spun round. "By the Fall of the Bastille!" he swore, "by the Belles of Ballyspellin! I could have sworn some foot belaboured my rear."

"You'll believe me now," said the poet when the boatman returned.

"I never knew the like," confessed the boatman.

"But we won't see Cuchulain," said the poet's friend.

"We'll see Cuchulain," maintained the poet. "We'll see Cuchulain before the thing's through."

The porters had ceased to load the coach. Horses were led from behind the

Donegall Arms and harnessed. Two men and a woman came from the hotel to take their places inside the vehicle.

"It won't hold us," complained the poet's friend.

"We'll sit on top," said the poet.

The three crossed the road and climbed to the coach roof. There were four seats in front and two behind the well. Out from the inn came two guards, armed with a brass blunderbus and a pair of pistols apiece. They swung into the seats behind the moderns. Followed a man with a whip, a large whip. He was the coachman and, when he had gathered the reins and enquired if all was well, the coach lurched off. It was the Dublin Day Mail.

"This is a unique experience," said the poet's friend.

"It's damned boring," sulked the poet.

"I've a crick in me back," discovered the boatman.

"What did Mr. Pickwick do to amuse himself when in a coach?" enquired the poet's friend.

"Conversed."

"And what did Wolfe Tone do?"

"He played a betting-game, of the number of telegraph poles type."

"Come to think of it," said the boatman. "I haven't seen a telegraph pole for miles."

"On an average, Tone found, the excitements of the great north road amounted to a cat and one-seventh of a cat per mile."

"We're nearing Newry," said the poet's friend.

"Something will happen there," promised the poet.

At the town, the coach changed horses for the second time, and when it left six dragoons rode with it by way of escort.

"I told you," said the poet.

"But what of Cuchulain?" harped his friend.

"Cuchulain's bound to turn up," said the poet.

The coach was on the mountain road to Dundalk. The guards gripped their wide-mouthed guns; the dragoons spread out and rode in two V formations, three before the coach, three behind it.

"We'll soon see him now," promised the poet. "The Hound of Ulster, guardian of Uladh from the men of Eireann." As he spoke there was a roar as of thunder, which caused the driver and the guards to turn up their collars. The sound was continuous, and it grew louder. Then down the road behind them appeared a chariot, drawn by two horses. The one horse was grey and the other was black. Beside the charioteer stood a young man garbed in a linen tunic, with a woollen mantle around his shoulders, caught by a golden brooch across his chest. "Cuchulain!" claimed the poet. The chariot swept clean through the rearguard of dragoons, who appeared unperturbed, and proceeded to do the same with the coach. "Jump!" said the poet, and—the

difference in speed between the two vehicles being small—all three landed successfully on the jolting platform behind the Hound of Ulster.

Cuchulain regarded them with distaste. "Partition cycle, I fancy?" he said.

"1937," replied the poet.

"A poor year, Laeg, wasn't it?" asked the hero.

"Middling," replied the charioteer. "There was a good spasm of fighting at the Linfield *versus* Celtic football match, but that was all."

"Who won?" said the poet's friend.

"The Blues," answered Cuchulain absently.

"And who will win in 1938?" asked the boatman.

"Och, stop asking silly questions," said the poet. "Now, what happened to us after the boat sunk?"

"You were rescued," said Laeg.

"Rescued!" scoffed the poet.

"Rescued," said Cuchulain.

"Rescued," muttered the poet's friend.

"Rescued?" said the poet.

"Rescued," said the boatman, who sat by the side of the poet's bed. "And they are trying to get me a parchment from London about it, and a medal, and the Belfast papers have started a fund to buy me a new boat."

"He towed us to the wreck," said the poet's friend. "He helped us hang on till the fishermen came."

"I'm a hero," said the boatman. "They put it in the paper that I'm a hero. Even if you had died, like the doctor said you should have done, even then I would have been a hero. Now which make of engine should I get put in my new boat?"

WILLIAM CARTER.

ART

SCHOOL OF ART REORGANIZATION

It might be cynically contended that Art has never owed anything to State management, that it grows out of the people and that a nation gets what it deserves or what it is ripe for in Art as in governments, city mayors, or political leaders. Rulers are sensitive to the reproach of materialism, however, and State Art Schools are now universal, intended, presumably, to replace the royal and aristocratic patronage which is alleged to have waned with the evolution of democratic government. Our own Metropolitan School of Art, founded by the R.D.S., has been for many years a State Institution, and was inherited as such by the Free State Government. A poor thing, but our own, it is controlled by the Department of Education, who probably regard it as an embarrassment, for our rulers share our general indifference to Art and, moreover, no investment in culture can be expected to yield any considerable political dividend.

Together with the Academy it may be said to represent official art in this country. Neither were ever natural growths of the nation and both are now anachronisms, relics of a political and social group, whose influence has almost disappeared. The task of devising something useful to take its place is enough to make the boldest hesitate and has been side-stepped for the last ten years. Art has no purely native tradition sufficiently recent to be vital. And while there should be little sympathy with the zealots who would throw all European culture out of the window and die artlessly worshipping the Tara Brooch, it must be realised that any native roots, no matter how tenuous, no matter how deeply buried in the centuries, would be a better stock than none. Unfortunately the roots are all dead. In music a great deal survives, in literature a little, in law and in the social economy of the Gael there are at least evidences. In drama and in art, as the term is understood to-day, there is nothing.

All that can be done then is to create a machinery suitable for art education, to infuse it with an Irish spirit, to give it ideals of beauty founded on what remains to us of an artistic past—and leave the rest to nature and evolution. It is almost exactly what Pearse set himself to do in the field of general education, but he brought to his problems a burning enthusiasm which will hardly attend the contemplated re-organisation of the School of Art. Having dragged through the time-worn stages of agitation, commissions of enquiry and reports, the final decisions and the working out of any scheme will probably become part of the weary routine of the official duties of a few civil servants. In the background the Department of Finance will hold a watching brief and, recognising that the field of art is financially and politically unproductive, will exercise to the full their power of veto.

None the less, there is a golden opportunity to lay sound foundations, but except that the word "school" is to be changed to "college," no one seems to

be very clear as to what will come out of the melting pot to which the old system is condemned. Some of the students stoutly maintain that the porters and the cleaning staff are to be raised to the dignity of University Professors—a not unreasonable belief since (although by no means overpaid) they are already receiving wages in excess of the stipend paid to the Professors of Drawing and Painting. There is room for change in many directions. The present school derives whatever traditions it has from London almost to the exclusion of the Continent, and England is artistically not the most important place in Europe. It would be a warm partisan who would claim for it any bigoted educational or artistic policy. In the direction and control of studies there is a certain lack of co-ordination arising largely from disabilities which its successor may not have to face. But it has clung to one valuable tradition at least, and that is, that the School is a nursery for artists. Since it became a State Institution it has developed a secondary objective, the production of "Art Teachers." From what one can learn of the new proposals there seems to be a suspicious emphasis on the granting of "Diplomas" in painting and sculpture, which smacks of the school-room rather than the studio. There is a possibility here of a conflict between two spheres of activity, both important, but widely separate. It may be the intention to extend the scope of the School's activities to cover adequately both fields and not merely one at the expense of the other. But there is a danger. Information is so meagre that one can only wait and see.

JOHN DOWLING.

MUSIC

THE BROADCASTING ORCHESTRA

THAT the high-priests of the Free State Post Office have decided on some measure of augmentation for the Athlone broadcasting orchestra, is a matter of more than passing interest. It is rather a mystery how the necessary few thousand pounds have been prized from the tight clutch of these gentlemen, who, whatever their qualifications in running an organization to assist the greasy commercial fumbling of the day, have never shown any aptitude for handling the financial aspects of the problems, artistic and aesthetic, that pertain to a broadcasting service. For the past ten years their fundamental policy seems to have been to get something for nothing, or, failing this, to get as much as possible for sixpence. Quantity, not quality, has been the axiom guiding them.

Their musical standard seems to be based on time values, much the same as telephone calls. Thus, a mouth-organ performance occupies ten minutes and a symphony orchestra plays for one hour; therefore, the orchestra is six times as valuable as the mouth-organ. Thus do the directors of Post Office policy, far-off, invisible beings, simplify all cranky aesthetic problems. Art is valued by book-keeping standards and a delightfully barbaric simplicity is achieved. They see the broadcasting service as a sort of bargain basement and are well content.

It is said that one should not look a gift horse in the mouth: but government departments have so often presented us with spavined nags that some suspicion regarding the value of these gift horses is excusable. Examination of the new augmentation proposals justifies our suspicions.

The wood-wind section of the new orchestra is to consist of single flute, oboe, bassoon and double clarionets. This means that most standard classical works will be beyond the range of the new combination. It may not give a true performance of even the small first symphony of Beethoven—it cannot play even a selection like the "Shamrock" without faking second flute, oboe, and bassoon passages. However, some things will be within its scope—those entractes beloved of cinema bands that used to be played when the cowboy hero, at last, gazed, with heaving chest, upon the face of his lady. With the aid of cued copies the wood-wind section will be able to struggle through these things for our delectation.

The brass section is to consist of two trumpets, two horns and one trombone. Three trombones, a necessity in the principal broadcasting orchestras of other countries, would be a sybaritic luxury in this land of ours—a poor land, with a yearly government revenue of only thirty million pounds. Two extra trombones would cost a whole five hundred pounds. Why! the department could have the services of five and a half telegram boys for that money. Three trombones, indeed!

But the very perfection of the vulgar business of getting something for

nothing is to be seen in the construction of the string section. It appears that there is to be no leader for this new orchestra. After the conductor, the leader, as the name implies, is the most important and most highly paid member of any combination—with duties exacting and difficult. Behold, though, we are about to teach the world that a leader is not necessary in orchestral playing—or, rather, that if there be a leader, it is unnecessary to pay him for his work of leading. Rumour has it that each of the first fiddles will take a period of leadership, turn and turn about, that, thus, the orchestra may reach the promised land of good performance. With one Moses to lead them, the Israelites reached the land of milk and honey after forty years of wandering; one may be pardoned for expressing some doubts as to the speed of this new orchestral voyage, when one sees that the orchestra is to be led by a bevy of unpaid Moses's. However, by this arrangement the Post Office financiers save some thirty shillings a week

And so, though we get government certificates and pedigrees stressing the worthiness, nobility, and speed of this thorough-bred, there is a "knobliness" about the knees of the brute that fills us with foreboding; makes us suspicious that this is no thoroughbred race-horse, as alleged, but a cab-horse, disguised. Cab-horses are cheaper than racers, but their performance in the field is, shall we say, somewhat unsatisfying.

The finances of our broadcasting services are in the hands of huxters and, only when financial control is taken from these fumbling fingers, will there be the possibility of worthy cultural activity by our broadcasting stations.

EAMONN O GALLCOBHAIR.

THE BALLETS RUSSES DE PARIS

The return visit of the Ballet Russes is very welcome in as much as one can hope for at least one regular ballet season each year. Regular visits are necessary if the taste for the ballet is to be cultivated. There has been a great improvement in the presentations since last year, yet the standard generally is only slightly above the mediocre. A maddening circumstance about the performances was that one number would raise one's expectations to the greatest heights, to be thrown back again into a slough of despair and disgust. Such a number was "Rhapsodie" Choreography by Margaret Severn; music by "Dohnzani." Here the interperation, the dancing, and the ensembles were almost perfect. The principals, Anton Vujanivitch and Mdle Maslova, showed that self-control, that restraint that is in the abandon of the real artist, a quality that was sadly lacking in most of the other performances except the Divertissements. The arm movements were admirable. The corps de Ballet as the Obstacles in this dance put in their best work of the season. There was perfect co-operation between the principals and themselves. A special word must be said for some lovely friezes.

The Divertissements produced some excellent solo work. The Blue Bird of Mdle. Ruth Makand was a revelation in miming. The tap work of Miss Gantham in "Gitanerias," her castanet playing and her handling of costume was noteworthy. This artist caught the essential spirit of the Spanish dance. In "Les Masques" Miss Severn bordered on genius, particularly in the "Ingenue." These mask dances are decidedly Miss Severn's genre. The "Suite Caucasienne" a ballet in one Act, music by Rubenstein, was ragged; the danseurs did anything but dance. Bolero was flat and monotonous. The choice of Miss Severn as Tina was a mistake. This surely is a dance where the rhythm should be strongly accentuated and sustained. It certainly was not, the principals being at fault. Rigmor Strom with some fine work on her points enlivened the dull "Spectre de la Rose"; of her *vis-à-vis*, Dokoudovsky, as the spectre, one only remembers a fine *temps de flèche* at the end. The "Souvenirs de Vienne" was pretty but spoiled by the final ensemble. A great weakness in the danseuses was their poor points, particularly in holding positions. The Gate Stage is far too small for ballet. However, Dublin owes the Ballet Russes a debt of gratitude for including it as a regular town on their tour.

P. J. FITZSIMONS

THEATRE

POET AND PEASANT

"The land of Saints and Scholars" has long been a boomerang for us Irish of the twentieth century—a contemptuous taunt aroused by our complacent decline from the cultural level of former centuries. I regret I myself must hurl it at our present-day Irish theatre, for saintliness and scholarship are sadly lacking there. I am moved to this by the contrast between "Murder in the Cathedral" at the Gate as done by the company from the Mercury Theatre, London, and the various plays done at the same time at the Abbey.

A part that any Irish Catholic actor should be completely at home in, was nobly and finely done by a "mere Sassenach." I refer to Robert Speaight's fine rendering of the part of Becket. There was no question here of casting to type. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Speaight later and was amazed at the youth of the real man—his Becket is so mature, so monumentally conceived, the part carried with such poise, such surely determined gesture, stance and movement. I do not think there is any Irish actor now capable of equally fine work and the reason, I am certain, is in a lack of spirituality, of genuine *feeling* coupled with control derived from mental development of the right kind.

Let me give detailed reasons. I referred last month to *co-ordination* as the aim of the regisseur. This is on the technical side and arises from the need for mental consistency on the part of all concerned and for sincerity in co-operation and in handling the given play. As I have said, the regisseur, the artist in the theatre, aims at the creation of Beauty, *his particular vision* of beauty, on the stage. His collaborators must be capable of seeing and doing their part in the creation of that vision and must be willing to do so. If they do not see nor help, he is helpless and must fail. For that reason only exceptional people and exceptional companies of players can do really great work. Yet, all that is needed, as I have proved in my own work, both by success or failure, on the part of everybody concerned is *sympathy* and *sincerity*. Just these. With these, an untrained actor, an amateur of the rawest description, has often held an audience where technical brilliance has merely pleased when sitting out a professional show. Yet sympathy, sincerity and self-control—derived by us all from increasing experience and training—are fundamental virtues in every walk of life, a part of natural religion, Christianity *in essentio*. It follows, therefore, that actors, producers, artists of any description, must have these qualities if their work is to have real, lasting, value. Otherwise there is a flashiness, a real polish but only on the surface, that pleases but does not exalt as real beauty does. For beauty, as I see it, is a manifestation, however clouded, of the Godhead and is capable of appreciation by everybody if they will only surrender to it. We all have these heart-stirring glimpses even though we cannot express them, are inarticulate—it is or ought to be, the glory of the artist that he can hold the vision and let others share in it to the best of their individual abilities. Thus our creative activities all can be

made to share in exalting us by bringing us nearer and nearer to the reality behind life—God, the creator.

Nor, in the theatre, does this outlook regard comedy as something too frivolous for its attention. Nothing is too frivolous for it and being essentially realist it faces up to the facts as they *are*, not as we would like them to be. It regards comedy as an expression of that joy in life which every sane culture aims at ensuring for its possessors. Again, it abhors unreality served up with a sugar coating of poesy—everything must be sane, just and true.

This was the outlook that made Ireland a land of real Saints and Scholars, for one went with the other—this has always been the aim of Catholic thought, and a nation predominantly Catholic as we are should reveal this in every walk of life and especially in art, and therefore in the theatre. But do we?

Take the Abbey. In the past month this theatre has done Denis Johnston's "Moon on the Yellow River," Yeats' "Shadowy Waters," and finally "Hassan" by Flecker. O'Casey's "The Shadow of a Gunman" was also done, as well as "The New Gossoon," and the difference in results has prompted the title to this article, for these "Abbey" plays are always done with a verve and an eye for the comic, mechanical perhaps but far more finished than are plays of the cosmopolitan type first mentioned. Beyond doubt, the present Abbey company is not now capable of doing poetic plays or indeed plays of any real feeling. I blame the undue preoccupation with realistic and comic plays of peasant and tenement life for this. Yet even these plays are wrongly done, nothing but the comic being regarded as "good theatre" by the actors. Undoubtedly, this "Abbey" type of show is highly entertaining, but it is maddening at the same time to see real talent going to waste in them for lack of proper direction. O'Casey is absolutely perverted in these presentations. "The Shadow of a Gunman" as done three weeks ago was nothing but a farce, all the social satire, the naive tragedy of Minnie Powell was lost—mainly through F. J. McCormick's really alive Seumas Shields. Arthur Shield's Davoren was too weak to pull the play into perspective, but in any case only a superman could cope with the audience, which could see nothing in the whole play but food for side-splitting laughter. As I said before, the Abbey has perverted its audience's taste by constant catering to its lower instincts, and now it must keep on doing so or lose its audience. Yet if necessary, this should be done and an effort made to get back to the old Abbey regime when work that the nation could really be proud of was done there. After all, it is our National Theatre.

The same week Yeats' "Shadowy Waters" was done. What a contrast! Never have I seen a more lifeless, ragged show, lacking in teamwork, in real feeling, in appreciation of rhythms in the verse, in catching the subtleties of this very delicate play. Not once did the play come to life—yet it was well staged, if not perfectly so, and the producer certainly had an eye for genuine effect. One had the feeling that he had been baffled by the inability, the lack of insight of his players—the sailors were utterly out of key, voices harsh or

out of tune, movements abrupt and careless ; F. J. McCormick as Aibric was pedantic, overdone, self-admiring ; Eileen Crowe's Dectora was lacking in real dignity or fineness, though occasionally a line that happened to suit her peculiar nasal contralto rang out with real beauty. Only Arthur Shields, I felt, did his best with his part as Forgael, and unfortunately his voice is too harsh, his movement and posing too angular to please in such a play. But he gets full marks for a genuine effort and the experiment of casting him was justified if only in this. Three things remain in my memory—the lovely lines of the gauzy sails in Miss Moisewitsch's setting, the delicate yet masterly playing by Miss Foley of Mr. May's incidental harp music and the glowing harp at the end, which unfortunately was cheapened by the previous bad acting through lack of mood-creation.

The week before, the Abbey did "The Moon in the Yellow River." This is really "good theatre," so amazingly brilliant that one is constantly held in spite of the distorted sense of values revealed by the author. As a candid expression of Ascendancy opinion on the National Movement it is of value, all the more so in revealing the Ascendancy heritage of satirical wit which has come down from Swift and Sheridan through Wilde and Shaw to our day. It is impossible not to regret the waste of such fine gifts through lack of cultural tradition springing from sympathy with the native outlook. If he had this, Denis Johnston would be a "significant" dramatist—as it is he is merely brilliant—an after-dinner speaker but no people's voice. The play being largely though not quite realist in treatment, was "into the Abbey's mitt," as the saying is. In fact, it was the best show of the month. Mr. Hunt's policy of unorthodox casting was again justified in a marvellous Tausch by Arthur Shields—never have I seen such a perfect upper middle-class Continental, rather simple, very careful as to appearances, redolent of the laboratory and draughting room. Barry Fitzgerald's Dobell was another revelation of the triumph of mind over matter that this actor is capable of. I had previously been delighted with his acting as a Senator in "Coriolanus," but the experience was renewed here. At times his weak voice failed to hold the stage properly, yet this was rare. Others outstanding were F. J. McCormick as Potts, another fine study of a real type of a most engaging kind, Eileen Crowe as Aunt Columba, and perhaps most of all, Phyllis Ryan, who is still attending school but whose rendering of the daughter showed real promise not only of finish but also of that sympathy and sincerity I desire to see in the Abbey. Denis O'Dea's Daryll Blake was a failure through lack of subtlety and control, nor was it improved by a pseudo-American accent acquired on recent visits to the States. M. J. Dolan's George was very well acted but badly spoken, and I grieved to hear the gorgeous technical description in Cockney of the wonder-working gun so badly rendered. U. Burke's Willy, and P. J. Carolan's Free State Officer were quite good and did as much as could be done with such caricatures of parts. A notable feature was the permanent set by Miss Moisewitsch which allowed effective exits and entrances in all three acts but

was especially fine in the armoury scene in removing the atmosphere of a "junk" filled room in an old fort.

Last week, the Abbey concluded its season with Flecker's "Hassan," using Basil Dean's adaptation. Now was revealed clearly the failure of the Abbey and the cause of it. The settings and costumes seem to have been conceived on the lines of an Arabian Nights tale—all surface appeal but no dramatic quality. This outlook was reflected in the production and in short, the whole show was a horrible example of the bourgeois mind jumbling with the poetic. This play is remarkable in its sensuous presentation of austerity and is at once highly spiritual and frankly gross. It is, in fact, a realistic rendering of Eastern outlook and idiom in every aspect. Above all it is spiritual in quality. Suffice it to say that not one character was in keeping with the real spirit of the play. Two scenes were deleted which are vital to the psychology of the play, the Prison Corridor scene and the Spirit of the Fountain scene. But the failure lay deeper than this. It was apparent that most of the players could only see the sensuous side of the play and were unable to face it without the usual bourgeois shamefacedness—hence a lack of "go" in their playing. The rest also saw it and revelled in it with an equally bourgeois—vulgarity. I am afraid the producer was not free from blame here, since he approved of a ballet that was quite out of keeping with the character presenting it. I confess I admired the daring of the dancer, but her dance was the last thing that would please the real Rafi while quite appropriate if done in the Caliph's palace. Wrong values again. Once again I am back where I started. Lack of spirituality, of the vital sympathy and sincerity is the crippling factor in the Abbey. This play is *essentially* spiritual, yet never was this quality apparent. I am driven to the conclusion it was never looked for, not having been discerned. Yet this is surely impossible. Lack of inner force in the personnel must then have been responsible. In short, fresh faces and change of heart are needed in the Abbey.

I had hoped to turn with relief to Martin Browne's production of "Murder in the Cathedral," but lack of space forbids. Next month then, remembering that work of this quality should be a commonplace at the Abbey, Our National Theatre.

SEAN O MEADHRA

FILMS

SUPPORTS

THE attractiveness of a film programme has often owed much to the selection of supporting items. Not infrequently a programme with a major feature of appalling mediocrity has been redeemed by a judicious arrangement of accompanying shorts.

In the planning of a programme the cinema manager too easily assumes that the short film must be relegated to an inferior position. This is most evident in the publicity accorded these waifs and strays of the cinema. In film history there have been isolated instances where shorts have blazed into the publicity lights, notably in the case of Walt Disney's "Three Little Pigs," but generally speaking, there is no publicity for or no account taken of the short feature, so that this film event is usually in the nature of a surprise item as far as the average picturegoer is concerned.

I am prompted to these remarks by the fact that several shorts of some importance as art and entertainment have recently been shown in Dublin, but since no publicity accompanied their showing, I have been unable to come across them. What is more, I have spoken with many people who would have been glad to see them, but who were likewise in the dark. On the other hand, I have spoken with other people—men in the street, who make no claim to be aesthetic analysts—who enthused about these films and by all accounts enjoyed them.

The principal film I have in mind is Basil Wright's "Night Mail to Scotland," which had a running commentary in verse by W. H. Auden. This film, I understand, occasioned a letter to the Press from an enthusiastic filmgoer.

Several films of the important English G.P.O. film unit have been shown, too. "Great Cargoes," by Paul Rotha, whose book, "Film Till Now," has proved an interesting introduction to the Art of the Film, has been shown.

Similarly, Flaherty and Grierson's "Industrial Britain" and "The Face of Britain" have filtered through the programmes unhonoured and unsung. Then there are the interesting series of German scenics being released by Irish International Films. There are the Gaumont Magazines, the March of Time newsreels, and, of course, the Disney cartoons. But choice is impossible for the public in these cases and only a specialist cinema can help, seeing that the managers do not consider it worth their while to advertise their goods.

Whether a newsreel and short feature cinema could be established over here as elsewhere is doubtful; but certainly a repertory art cinema which is badly needed could capture for its programmes the best quality shorts and by adequate recognition, and because of that guarantee of quality give them the chance of reaching that public which wants to see them.

A repertory cinema should prove an interesting and remunerative venture for some enthusiastic spirit in the film trade. There is no doubt but that, while keeping the popular audience, it would in addition attract those whose

permanent interest and support are not at present given to the inartistic pretentious commercial cinema.

Thus would good shorts find a home and lend their support to their bigger and more respectable brothers of the screen.

Meanwhile, I hear that there is an attempt being made to establish an Irish documentary film group on the lines of the G.P.O. unit. If the same methods are adopted there is no doubt but that this would set the foundation for a real Irish cinema of which we might be proud, and would do much to focus attention on the importance of the short film as pure film, art and entertainment.

LIAM Ó LAOGHAIRE.

Mystery of the Mary Celeste. Direction: DENNISON CLIFT. A film which left much to the imagination, including scenario, direction, camera work and acting. Bela Lugosi's and George Mozart's good performances were merely oppressive due to the general atmosphere prevailing.

Last Days of Pompeii. Direction: ERNEST B. SCHOEDSACK. While not good cinema there were many pleasant things to be found in this film. For one thing it carried an air of sincerity in the direction. Its sets (artificiality within artificiality) were consistent in quality. There was a lack of sentimentousness, which is what one dreads most from a Hollywood historical. Some individual scenes were finely handled. Preston Foster was convincing as the hero, while a startlingly fine performance was given by Basil Rathbone as Pilate. But the film closed on a note of Hollywood hokum. I have always failed to see the association between a Sunday school choir and the presence of Christ on the screen. Remember the jarring effect of the device in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." An entertaining film by Schoedsack, who was once an artist, and made "Grass," "Chang" and "Rango."

The Last Journey: Direction: BERNARD VORHAUS. Of the unpretentious competent type of British film. Shows the usual feeling for character and is backed up by good photography. Much more satisfying than "Rome Express," while the psycho-analytical treatment of a mad engine driver must surely be the most original kind of last minute save the screen has ever known. Enjoyable with good acting from Godfrey Tearle, Viola Tree, Nelson Keys, Frank Pettingell and the leads. The railway atmosphere being the main contribution towards satisfaction.

Faust, with Webster Booth, Denis Hoey and Anna Ziegler. This Spectrocolour potted version of the opera is interesting as an experiment. The colour process was rather a fiasco, but did suggest possibilities as to the use of colour with music. Again there were indications that a filmic technique could intensify the music. Altogether the effect was definitely to tend towards a blend of film, colour and music without ever quite getting there. Considering the conventions of opera the singers were quite restrained. The first and last scenes formed the body of the film while the rest of the opera was practically cut. It was possible to enjoy this film.

Rhodes of Africa : Direction : BERTHOLD VIERTTEL. Which goes to show that biography is not the ideal film subject and that the continuity of film is not that of life. A scrappy unconvincing piece of work with inserted compensations. Walter Huston's art could not make Rhodes vital and Oscar Homolka as Kruger was by far the more interesting personality in the film. Werndorff's sets, especially those of the Kruger household, were part of the compensations. A bad scenario with an overflow of dialogue was mainly responsible for this wasted opportunity. As regards the charge of soldiers and natives across plains, we may say we are not amused. In 1900 we might have been but to-day we demand something more than photographic actuality. We want to relate incident and at the very least to that physical medium in which it exists.

Smiling Through : Direction : SIDNEY FRANKLIN. A revival of interest in that two of its stars will soon be seen together in "Romeo and Juliet." In the present film sweet sentimentality has its fling with Shearer doing the weeps, Howard "refaned" and March appropriately desperate. The audience enjoyed itself with loud laughter all through, and I don't know but that they were right. Cedric Gibbon's designs and Adrian's gowns let you know its an M.G.M. film. Even Lee Garmes photography was in the tradition.

The Voice of Broadcasting : Direction : JOHN GRIERSON and STUART LEGG. A G.P.O. Unit film of interest and some merit. Realising the difficulties and traps that lay in wait for anyone who tackled the B.B.C. as a subject for cinema, it is pleasing to see how the camera breaks the shackles of Portland Place and roams the countryside. Nevertheless, it is not a very important film, and is as much at the mercy of sound as any commercial movie entertainment. This was, of course, to be expected from the title.

L. Ó. L.

BOOK SECTION

RECENTLY, in a broadcast talk, Professor Daniel Corkery spoke of the manner in which Irish writers review books in periodicals published abroad, commenting on the fact—I can only reproduce the trend of his remarks—that these reviews did not suggest that the modern Irish critic is very much different from the English or American critic. Now, it so happens, that we open in this section a place where Irish writers may review, without sensing any form of restraint, books which some of them may also be reviewing simultaneously elsewhere ; and it will be interesting to note whether, in practice, there is in criticism any good reason to expect that a man's nationality affects his judgment, or the manner in which he expresses his judgment. This is not merely an interesting test but a very important one for Irish literature, and it opens up far more questions than there is room to consider here. One, however, we may touch on.

Criticism, after all, is not merely a form of mechanical estimation which says : " This is very good, this is fairly good, this is very amusing, this is fairly amusing," or of mechanical analysis which says : " The construction, plot, style, atmosphere, etc., is this, that, or the other." For one thing a good critic is perpetually seeking after originality—the unique personal quality which differentiates the imitator from the initiator, or which, where a tradition has been established, differentiates the man who adds something to the tradition from the man who is merely exploiting it. And, here, in Ireland, where we are for a number of reasons cut off from intelligent criticism, from that vibrant and keen atmosphere in which books, pictures, music, plays, are being constantly talked of, taken to pieces, examined, teased out, compared, nothing is so easy—and in practice nothing has been so common—as for a convention to arrive late and stay long, virtually unquestioned ; as happened with the convention of the realist novel which arrived here so late that it is now in its first wind here when it is in its second wind everywhere else. I am certain, to take another example, that the so softly-lyrical, so easily-frayed poetry of the *Celtic Twilight* school—which the genius of Yeats, almost alone, has woven tighter and tighter until what had no fibre became firm and unassailable—might very easily have produced much more work of a lasting nature had we here, in the nineteen hundreds, a searching school of criticism to prevent an easy convention from being established among our poets.

But this thing cuts both ways. Even in criticism a convention may easily become ossified. And should the Irish critic say to himself : " I must approach this thing from the point of view of an Irishman—or of a realist—or of a romantic—or from any *a priori* point of view, whatever it may be—then the trouble will be, not that Irish critics do not differ with English critics, or American critics, or French critics, but that they will not differ with one another ; and, worst of all, literature will be searched, not for its unique personal quality, but for whatever quality it " ought," in the judgment of the predisposed critic, possess.

In this section of IRELAND TO-DAY we hope to disclose the existence of a flexible, informed, individual, and unprejudiced criticism. We shall search for that type of critic who does not think that his own pleasure or displeasure at the opinions or approach of a writer is sufficient for approval or disapproval, and we may, thereby, in time, succeed in articulating reasonably the basis of our own peculiar instinct of life.

That, however, it should be obvious, clear-cut, easily predictable, is the last thing to be desired. It takes all sorts to make a nation, as many strands and colours as to make a rich carpet or tapestry. Life will be a very stale, torpid affair when we cannot, within broad—very broad—limits, agree to differ.

S. O'F.

FICTION

STUDS LONIGAN. By James T. Farrell. (*Constable*, 8s. 6d.).

FIRES OF BELTANE. By Geraldine Cummins. (*Michael Joseph*, 7s. 6d.).

WE IN CAPTIVITY. By Kathleen Pawle. (*Cassell*, 7s. 6d.).

UGLY BREW. By Jake Wynne. (*Chatto and Windus*, 7s. 6d.).

TWENTY years ago Henry James wrote an essay on the modern novel—Mr. Bennett, and Mr. Wells, and the young Mr. Walpole and the new novelist Mr. Lawrence. And as James, apart from his exasperating prolixity and his abominable style which makes him almost unreadable, was a good critic his general remarks remain current coin; they also so remain because the modern novel is just about where it was twenty years ago. Of *Clayhanger* he said what may be said with equal force about James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan*—

This most monumental of Mr. A. B.'s recitals . . . is so describable through its being a monument exactly not to an idea, a pursued and captured meaning, or in short to anything whatever, but just simply of the quarried and gathered material it happens to contain, the stones and bricks and rubble and cement and promiscuous constituents of every sort that have been heaped in it, and thanks to which it quite massively piles itself up.

This is magnificent, and it is exactly where the modern novel, thick in the head and strong in the back, fish-dumb, flesh-fat, all brawn and no brains, certainly no spirituality, the Bennett-Brew based on a purely materialist idea of life, "gets off." Here in *Studs Lonigan* is a typical monument to nothing; 840 pages of it, and put an eagle's feather or a coloured heartsease between it and the pantechnicon of Mr. Thomas Wolfe's half-a-million words if you want to see an image of beauty crushed and killed by this craze for monumentism.

I shall not say that to summarise *Studs Lonigan* is impossible; nothing is easier. Studs is the son of a Catholic-Irish painter-and-decorator father in down-town Chicago; he does all the things kids do (or are supposed by this country to do in every other country but this) and he does them with typical American gusto, brutality, and speed, *e.g.*:

Studs cracked Danny on the jaw with all his might, and the punk, holding his mush in his hands, bawled. Most of the guys saw Denny's swollen jaw, so they didn't try to kid Studs . . .

These punks, goofies, softies, boy-scouts, tough guys, with their gats and their knuckle-dusters and their gin-bottles and their broads and tarts who have or have not plenty of "it" pour in and out of pool-rooms and gambling-dens, play crap in cans, leg it, howl, and yell, lick, bust, whizz or smack the lousy

foreigners, and each smack is a beaut, line up in St. Patrick's, where Father Gilhooly tries to hammer or coax them into something like human beings, go to confession and to the mission, snoop after girls, work their way through the ten commandments, feel as goofy as young punks with falling socks or feel a quiver when they think of Hell, or go on glorious jags and feel hard-boiled and grown up. Then they grow-up, and that means they don't grow-up. They just carry on until they die, as Studs dies. Just like that: *dies*. Is quite dead, in fact. You know he's dead because his mother cries, and his girl whom he has left with child, cries too. And that is naturally the end of the book.

The measure is good, and there are descriptions of a Marathon Dance, a Mission (sermons in full), an Initiation into a Catholic Fraternity (Knights of Saint Christopher), a gambling hell, a brothel or two, and what have you? But, says Henry James:

Let us profess all readiness to repeat that we may still have had, on the merest "life" system or that of the starkest crudity of the slice all the entertainment that may come from watching a wayfarer engage with assurance in an alley that we know to have no issue—and from watching for the very sake of the face he may show us on reappearing at the mouth.

In other words, this is all about poor folk in Chicago, but is that enough for a novel to be about? Could not a sociologist give us exactly the same sense of reality, or an autobiography? Indeed, a sociological cross-section, an anthropologist's report, might give us more because it would give us a consideration of all that is involved; and as James, sound man, says more than once: "consideration as an element of the aesthetic pleasure" (and we need not put it higher, for this once) may be postponed but it cannot be shelved. Here is reality untransmuted, unrarefied, a "chunk of life" which does not even formulate, though it may adumbrate, the query, the innumerable queries, that life involves.

Yet, I do say that literature and the novel apart, this is a tremendously real book. If it had been written about Greece or Rome it would be to-day one of the famous books of the world, and in five hundred years time the only thing to prevent it from being one of the most famous books in the world will be the fact that there will then be records more ample and more astonishing in any newspaper library. "Yes, but what did these people *think* about life?" Time will ask. So we ask, to-day, of all these naturalistic, realistic, brutalist, romantic novels. We ask, "What is your norm?" Mr. Farrell, like *Suds Lonigan*, just sighs and spits. *Il sait tout mais il ne sait que cela*.

The book will be banned in this country, and it should not be; like a medical museum, it's better than a mission.

Now we turn to *Fires of Beltane* by Geraldine Cummins, and, at once, we see the merit of *Studs*. Miss Cummins is lyrical, gentle, tender. Her heroine is that type of Irish girlhood which is so evasive in quality, so secret, so inward ("bat-like" was Joyce's phrase, the brutal, bitter word, where "wren-like" would have been the loving one) that nobody before Miss Cummins has tried to describe the type. Norah Keogh, reared as a good Catholic girl, with a dash of Fenian tradition in her blood, has, however, in Miss Cummins' conception of the type, a good deal of the pagan hidden away beneath the outer appearance of orthodoxy. She falls in love with John Louis St. Blaise, a dandy from the city (Cork), and, when the fires of Beltane flare on the hills, the old paganism comes to the surface. She sins. She marries the clodhopper farmer whom she has never liked, and in her life with him, the hard life of the fields, she expiates her fault. Irish readers, made accustomed to crude realism by the hand-me-down realism of the Abbey Theatre will probably say, here and there, in the

more fantaisiste parts, "No, this is not true to life." Will they, in that case, turn to *Studs Lonigan*, and say, "Yes, that *is* life?" Well, there can be no denying that *Studs Lonigan* is more real; it is in a clean-cut convention, there; but, in this gentle, kindly, lovable novel of Miss Cummins I must say, for all that I dislike this Celtic Twilight spooky business, I find more sense of the variety of implications involved in every human experience.

We in Captivity by Miss Kathleen Pawle is so appalling that the pun is in tune with the mood it invokes. Ignatius Proudfoot is the Studs Lonigan of the novel; he is reared in Meath, has a boy-and-girl friendship with Maureen, the daughter of Mary the Brogue, who sees fairies and talks of The Land of the Ever Young, and Grania, and the darling princesses of the netherworld and drivels on generally in a manner midway between a Jimmy O'Dea parody of the old Queen's, and an American school-marm repeating what a jarvey in Killarney told her about Tir na n-Og. Ignatius goes to school to Rochenoir (subtle disguise) driven there down O'Connell Street on a side-car by a jehu who swigs whiskey en route and bawls out his sorrow for poor ould Parnell in crazy song. Just before 1916 Ignatius, while still at school, is sworn into the I.R.B. by Pearse in the Volunteer H.Q. in Dawson Street (which Ignatius reaches by doubling from Merrion Square through Lower Mount Street). Maureen, still seeing fairies, is meanwhile drinking the cup of bliss in service with Lord Challice. . . . The authoress is an American.

Beyond any question Jake Wynne's *Ugly Brew* is the best book on this list. It is, again, a novel of the Troubles, dealing solely with the period before the Treaty, and like Mr. Patrick Mulloy's *Jackets Green* (banned here) is strong, brutal stuff. It consists, really, of a series of adventures, many of them easily recognisable as operations of the Squad during the Tan war in Dublin, which gradually wear down the stamina of the central figure, Martin O'Neill. All the sense of horror, and fear, and determination, of suppressed emotion, and weakness held in check, that we may still remember from those days is re-evoked here most realistically, heightened somewhat too much, and, I think, inartistically, by the modern preference for immediate to delayed impact. There are no undertones, and so nothing to re-read, and the considerations which the book does contain are not generous or measured; they really do not impress, because one feels that Mr. Wynne is putting into Martin's mouth conclusions arrived at much later. I have no doubt that the savage bitterness of disillusion which tinges the whole book will displease many Irish readers, and even disgust some, many things, including the final touch, where Martin, leaving Ireland, vomits into the sea ("It was his farewell gesture") will enrage our more thin-skinned nationalists. Again, if we are so fond of realism, here it is. It all sounds true enough to me, and we do not, I trust, wish to fool ourselves into thinking that such things as war can ever be pretty, or that ideals can be defended by fine speeches and elegant behaviour.

They are an interesting batch of books. If any man reads them all and puts them against modern life, here and elsewhere, they will suffice to make for a long bout of thinking and arguing on the relation between art and life, and the individual Irishman trying or failing to fit into his community.

SEÁN O FAOLÁIN.

A NEW HISTORY OF IRELAND

A HISTORY OF IRELAND. By Edmund Curtis, M.A., D.Litt., Professor of Modern History in the University of Dublin. With five maps. (*Methuen*, 1936, 12s. 6d. net).

There are few persons so competent to write a history of Ireland as is

Professor Curtis. In approaching that task he has the advantage of being for many years historian, scholar and lecturer in this field. Those who have profited from his illuminating studies in our mediaeval history will take up the present volume with particular interest. Their expectations of excellence will not be disappointed. Dr. Curtis has certainly produced another noteworthy book.

To write the history of Ireland in four hundred pages is not an easy matter. To review that History in four hundred words is almost as difficult. Probably no better clue could be found to his view-point than Dr. Curtis's own preface. "The main task," he says, "must be to trace the story of the majority who have finally achieved nationhood, and who in the struggle have always found among the Protestant minority leaders and heroes, and a constant body of sympathy and aid. The natural ties between Irishmen are, indeed, stronger than their political and religious divisions; strong enough, indeed, if encouraged by our leaders, to effect that true union of all Ireland which, in spite of many great victories, remains unachieved." Dr. Curtis frankly regards the history of Ireland from a national standpoint.

As might be expected, the mediaeval chapters are most brilliant. Here the author is at his best, treading the paths which his own work has done so much to clear. Nor is this section a mere adaptation of his larger work on the same subject. Much of the matter expounded in *Mediaeval Ireland* is here supplemented, so that students of the period will need to utilise both books, the former for many of the details, the latter both for further information, and for that adjustment of view-point which increasing knowledge naturally brings about in every scholar.

It is only natural that the period in which he has specialised, and in which he has carried out much valuable pioneer work should be conceded a large amount of expository matter. As a consequence, we need not regret that other periods have had less space devoted to them. In many ways the mediaeval period is the most important in Irish history; it is certainly so from the point of view of the student, who, having once grasped the atmosphere of mediaeval Ireland, can approach the study of its later history with a ready understanding.

Professor Curtis is to be congratulated that, in the midst of the arduous work of lecturing, editing Ormond deeds, and carrying on research work, he has been able to find time to produce this book, which will earn for him the gratitude of history students generally. It is satisfactory to note that the book has already become a favourite with the reading public.

R. DUDLEY EDWARDS.

XVIIITH CENTURY DUBLIN

DUBLIN UNDER THE GEORGES. By Constantia Maxwell, M.A., Litt.D. (*Harraf*).

Miss Maxwell, who lectures on History in Trinity College, has a theme here which well accords with her established reputation and previous work on *Arthur Young in Ireland*, *Irish History from Contemporary Sources*, etc. For the revival of classical travel-books, the history of the Stage, the social and artistic life of the early modern ages she has a genius, for how people wined, dined, sinned and amused themselves, in short, how they lived when they were not being heroic, patriotic, and affected. She is not afraid of Anglo-Saxon monosyllables, and writes admirably in what the present reviewer anyway likes, a graceful, clear, masterly style.

She has here one of the admittedly great themes of social history, Dublin

in the age 1714 to 1830. An age when "Eblana" (for the Gael was not yet in fashion and only uncouth cattledrivers coming up from Meath thought of it as "B'lacliath") was full of the houses of peers, gentry and bishops, resounded to the eloquence of Grattan and De Burgh, and the irony of Swift, left the work to the lower orders (who also enjoyed themselves) and got a remarkable reputation, which the English still believe in, for wit, eloquence, romance, pathos, and artistic genius. A Dublin also without drains or policemen, and inconceivably filthy (Miss Maxwell does not spare the stomach-turning details) where the basements of our admired houses were rabbit-warrens for hordes of servants, and our Irish beauties walked the streets in pattens to avoid the ordure underfoot.

Miss Maxwell, like a true historian, hides nothing, but, being also a very human historian, knows very well that the circulating amount of happiness, or let us say gaiety of heart, is very much the same throughout human history. A day at Donnybrook fair was as memorable an event as a day at Croke Park, finishing with the Cinema, is to-day, and the individual then did not need to have the fun, the sex appeal, or the music produced for him out of a box or a film. Every one of her eight chapters deals with these varied aspects, the growth of Dublin, the life of the rich and the poor, intellectual and artistic life, the theatre, industry and commerce—and what English visitors thought of us. We apparently developed then the great art of taking them in. Her chapter on the Theatre is particularly fascinating.

Miss Maxwell's handsomely printed and richly illustrated volume will, I think, be for long the last and best word on Dublin's aristocratic age.

EDMUND CURTIS.

ROGER CASEMENT

ROGER CASEMENT. By Geoffrey de C. Parmiter. (*Arthur Barker*, 15s. 0d.).

It is entirely fitting that the final vindication of the Public career and the private character of Roger Casement should have come from the pen of an Englishman. The passions and prejudices engendered by the Great War were, of course, largely responsible for the almost unanimous chorus of approval that greeted his execution, but even to-day in Britain enough bitterness remains to prevent the repatriation of his body to his native country. Englishmen have seldom understood Irish idealists; in this case the misunderstanding is so deep that it has survived the passing of twenty years.

The virtue of Mr. Parmiter's book is that, in addition to being an admirably impartial and fully documented biography, it demonstrates conclusively that Casement's part in the drama of 1916 was no sudden piece of quixotic idealism, but the logical outcome of a career in which love of country and hatred of imperialism had always been the predominant factors. Despite the honours, unsought and unwanted, which official England had conferred upon him, Casement was never confronted with a dilemma of conscience nor was he the victim of divided loyalties. From the days of the Boer war the cause of oppressed small nations, and more particularly of the small nation to which he gave all his allegiance, had been his passion.

Mr. Parmiter has been fortunate in having had access to hitherto unpublished letters and papers which throw new light on many aspects of Casement's career. The story he has to tell would be a fascinating one in the hands of even a dull writer. Mr. Parmiter's writing is anything but dull; it is a chronicle of absorbing

interest, in which the tall, handsome man, "looking exactly as if he had stepped out of a canvas by Velasquez," emerges as a figure of untarnished honour and unassailable integrity, a perfect knight *sans peur et sans reproche*.

M. J. MACMANUS.

TWO PATRIOTS

HENRY GRATTAN. By Roger J. McHugh. (*Talbot Press*, 2s. 6d.).

HENRY JOY McCracken. By Edna C. Fitzhenry. (*Talbot Press*, 2s. 6d.).

These are two pleasing additions to the *Noted Irish Lives* series issued by the Talbot Press. The book by Mr. McHugh is an attempt in very limited space to present Grattan "in relation to his time and the problems of his time." It happens frequently that in this, surely unnecessary, phrase of biographers, the significance of "relation" is overlooked, so that the time and the problems are only shading. Here, however, the exposition of the trends of the period is far too accurate to be so regarded; yet, one feels that the author has been lenient with Grattan in regard to the matters in which his political judgment is acknowledged to have been at fault. Not to be definite in the censure of Grattan for his refusal to make Catholic Emancipation a concession to democracy as O'Connell did, or for his attitude at the time of the Volunteers' demand for reform is to withhold the full recognition of the worth of Flood and Tone.

The story of Grattan has something of the elements of saga; his integrity, the flame of his oratory, his antagonisms, his duels, his manliness, his humanity, his death-voyage give his life a colour which the author has used with a prudence that makes his book delightful to read. It does appear, as he suggests, that there is a place for a re-valuation of Grattan along the lines of the "splendid nationality" which Davis saw in him; but then Pearse reversed the decision of Davis which placed him above Tone; nor did he find in Davis himself the exhaustive nationality.

Grattan's "blue flame" is, too, the direct, if distant, cause of the writing of this second book on Henry Joy McCracken.

Miss Fitzhenry tells his story tenderly and directly, and, in the light of her account of his early life, it is clear that hitherto the great breadth of his humanity has not been appreciated. His association with the immortal Bunting, and his opposition to Wolfe Tone on the question of French help, invest him with an importance which historians of the period cannot neglect. If our own times had not seen the harvesting of the seed which was sown in '98, McCracken's pitiable end would read like an exculpation of Grattan.

TOMÁS Ó LAOI.

YEATS NEVER FORGETS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE. By W. B. Yeats. (London: *Macmillan*, 8s. 6d. net).

The poet is essentially the poet, not novelist, essayist, critic nor even recorder of his own past in prose. Poets have written good prose and interesting prose, but it is read not for itself but as a sidelight on the poet. Neither is the prose writer a poet.

James Joyce wrote technically perfect verse but it was the verse of a novelist. W. B. Yeats has written much prose, but it is the prose of a poet, and this is rue of his latest volume of reminiscences *Dramatis Personae*. *Hail and Farewell* was the great but cranky sneer of a difficult man. *Dramatis Personae*

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covers practically the same period and scene and is obviously the truth of Yeats rather than the fiction of Moore, and of this very reason it lacks the colour and breadth which lend such interest to the Moore world. Moore dramatised and exploited not only every incident which occurred or might have occurred, but also his own personal emotions or what he would like them to have been. Yeats lets us see just as much of his life as he chooses but we have the feeling, as we have in his poetry, that all we see is valid.

The book is divided into four sections of which the most interesting, because the most personal, are those entitled *Estrangement* and *The Death of Synge*. Here we are admitted to the mind of the poet. There is wisdom here, and thought, and the germs of many of his poems as : "They (the lower-middle class) contemplate all creative power as the eunuchs contemplate Don Juan as he passes through Hell on the white horse," which becomes the poem on the Playboy :

Once, when midnight smote the air,
Eunuchs ran through Hell and met
On every crowded street to stare
Upon great Juan riding by :
Even like these to rail and sweat
Staring upon his sinewy thigh.

All those who have loved Yeats' poetry will find this record of those who helped him and influenced him, of those whom he knew or met, an explanation and often a clarification, of the moods which his poems express.

DONAGH MACDONAGH.

ANOTHER IRISH POET

THREE OLD BROTHERS. Frank O'Connor. (*Nelson*, 2s. 6d.).

These poems are well written in the Romantic manner, perhaps too well written, most of them. They come well through the usual tests ; for instance, the epithets in description of natural objects, the sounds of the words, the cunning rhymes are vivid and appropriate. Yet the old symbol of the arrogance of the individual against the world, the Beggar, seems here polished and conventional in spite of his violent language. The dissatisfaction is felt only in poems of purely literary inspiration, such as *The Three Brothers*, which though lively and dramatic is marred by some conventionalities of phrasing. As for the third *Statue of Life*, it is so perfect in one of Yeats' manners that it might just as well have been written by Yeats. Where other could a model be found for the unsuitable practice of arguing in the lyric stanza? And both in this and in similar poems of Yeats the strain and defiance seem to show, what is true enough, that that hazy "principle" the imagination, conceived as the architect of all passions and institutions, needs a lot of defending.

Those poems are the best which proceed evidently from the author's own deeply felt experience of Ireland. These include *Alone*, which could serve as the profession of any of the many unknown worker-mystics ; *Prelude* concerning the small town, in whimsical technique ; and, above all, the lyrical satire called *The Patriot*. *Irish Channel 1* is rather spoiled by the intrusion of humour ; but *Irish Channel 2*, with its sinuous alexandrines and winding metaphor is very fine. *A Statue of Life*, 1 and 2, are accounts of a new wave of Irish life felt first by the author. So is the *Quest of the Dead O'Donovans*, but the latter is distinguished from other poetic experiences of Ireland, written

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